# Driven into Exile

A. L. O. E.

#2202

Daisy Lambert

To dear Louis, with
much love from
Auntie Bertha.

Christmas 1899.

"My duty to God must come before even my duty to the king."

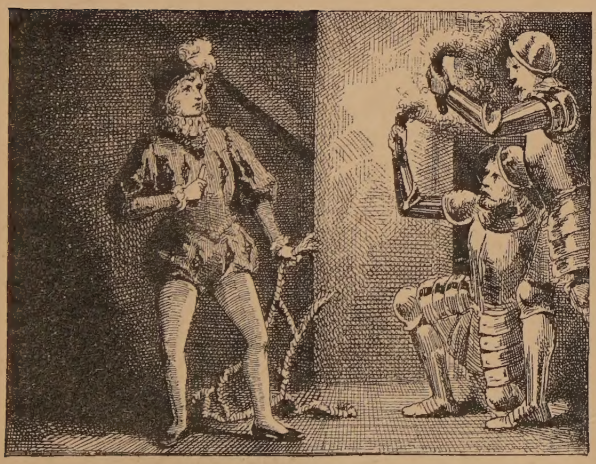
page 36.

# DRIVEN INTO EXILE

## A Story of the Huguenots

By

A·L·O·E



LOUIS MADE PRISONER.

*page 147*

T. NELSON AND SONS
London, Edinburgh, and New York.

# DRIVEN INTO EXILE

*A Story of the Huguenots.*

*By*

**A. L. O. E.,**

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*&c. &c.*

LONDON:
T. NELSON AND SONS, PATERNOSTER ROW.
EDINBURGH; AND NEW YORK.

1894

# Preface.

THE expulsion of the Protestants from France, after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, is a fact which needs no comment here. It is written in history in letters broad and black, yet gilded by the faith and devotion of those who became exiles for conscience' sake. I have made this expulsion the ground-work of my story; the design of which is to show how faith like that of Abraham enabled God's people at a later period to follow his example, leave home and country, and go forth as pilgrims and strangers. As a missionary in India, I see daily those whom the same faith has led to give up all for the Saviour—to break asunder the closest, dearest ties, if these ties would keep them from Him. Whether in England, France, or India, it is *the love of Christ that constraineth;* trials but strengthen, persecutions but brighten that golden chain which binds us to Him.

A. L. O. E.

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# DRIVEN INTO EXILE.

## CHAPTER I.

### THE WOMAN OF TACT.

"BUT you must persuade your father!" cried Madame Duval.

"Persuade!" repeated Adéle la Force bitterly; "can we persuade that grand cedar to bow its tall form like a reed? can we persuade the snow-capped mountain to sink into a valley? As easily could we persuade my father to draw back one inch from the spot where he has planted his foot."

"Does not the marquise use her influence? A woman who has wit in her brain can usually guide her husband," said Madame Duval, making her words more emphatic by the movements of a large painted fan which she held in her hand. "There is coaxing"—the fan was gently fluttered; "flattering"—the wave became slower; "reproaches"—the lady brought the fan down sharply

on her own knee; "tears, despair!"—the fan was suddenly closed, to express a total collapse.

"The marquise never attempts to influence my father; she says that it is a wife's part to obey." (Madame Duval shrugged her shoulders, for she had a great contempt for this axiom, and never herself acted upon it.) "And she is right," continued Adéle la Force; "right to be willing to follow when she has such a man as my father to lead."

"Cousin Elizabeth's mind is very mediocre," observed Madame Duval; "she has no kind of originality or *esprit.* I am always sorry on your account, *ma petite,* that since the marquis chose to marry a second time, he did not give his children a step-mother more *spirituelle.* But what could one expect from an *Anglaise!*"

"My step-mother certainly does not understand me," said Adéle, a little petulantly. "I can never forget her shocked look, and the lecture which she gave me, when she once found Louis and me galloping on one pony, I riding in the fashion of a boy. The marquise had lately come from England, and I suppose that people are more dull and solemn there, to match the climate."

"Not at the court certainly," said Madame Duval with a smile; "King Charles the Second and the beauties at Nonsuch did not trouble themselves much about proprieties. But I don't believe that Cousin Elizabeth was ever within a hundred miles of a court; I doubt whether

she had ever put her foot into a coach, or even a sedan; and if she ever rode, it would be on a pillion behind her father. I think that the marquise likes to imitate the birds—the brown sparrows, I mean—and only wear one style of dress, and that of the simplest. The dear creature" (the speaker's tone was one of contempt) "has no more idea of fashion and *ton* than the sparrows possess!"

"All the better for her when this dreadful, dreadful fall comes," observed Adéle with a heavy sigh.

"It cannot come, it must not—it shall not!" exclaimed Madame Duval. "The marquis will never be so cruel, so insane, as to leave this beautiful home of his ancestors just for a few trifling differences in the matter of religion. The king, the grand monarch, has chosen to revoke the Edict of Nantes; he wants all his subjects to worship as he does. *Eh bien!* it is easy to conform in mere externals; as Henry of Navarre said, 'Paris is worth a mass.' We need not be wiser than our famous hero. I say that Château la Force is worth a mass, and a great many too; there is not a fairer estate in all the province of Normandy."

Tears gathered in Adéle's eyes as she glanced around her; and, in truth, her childhood's home was one in which the girl might feel natural pride. The saloon in which she was seated with the wife of her cousin was lofty and long, one end of it richly hung with ancient tapestry. The furniture was antique, somewhat heavy,

but handsome. Some fine portraits hung on the wall, painted by Holbein and Vandyck, giving an impression that beauty was hereditary in the family of La Force. There were also more warlike ornaments, in the shape of banners won at Ivri, and weapons, of which some were very ancient, with some chain armour worn by a crusading ancestor in the days of Philip Augustus. The depth of the window recesses, in which were seats of carved oak, showed the thickness of the massive walls, which had stood a siege during the war of La Fronde. And most charming was the view to be seen from these windows; for Château la Force stood on a little eminence girdled with a beautiful park, beyond which a fair expanse of country was seen, with the sea, like a silver edging, touching the distant horizon.

The appearance of Adéle, the marquis's only daughter, was in keeping with her surroundings. The girl might be some fifteen summers old, with dark, lustrous, intelligent eyes, and complexion which, though less fair than that of an English girl, wore a richer bloom on the cheek, a brighter coral on the lip, than are usually bestowed on maidens to the north of the Channel. Adéle's movements had the easy grace natural to one accustomed to high society: her dress, though not of expensive material, was elegant, and according to the costume worn by ladies during the latter part of the reign of Louis Quatorze. Madame Duval was richly, even extravagantly

attired, in the height of the reigning fashion, and yet had something of vulgarity in her appearance. Her rich silk dress, worn with a peaked bodice, was looped back on both sides so as to display a petticoat of costly brocade. Her sleeves, which scarcely reached below the elbows, were ornamented with the same kind of expensive point lace as that which edged the upper part of her bodice. Madame Duval's cheeks were highly coloured, but not by the hand of Nature; and not from Nature came the profusion of black curls which clustered on each side of the head, and fell in heavy coils on the neck. The lady's manner was lively, her speech rapid, and garnished with many exclamations, which savoured too much of profanity to be recorded. Madame's frequent appeals to the *bon Dieu* certainly belonged to the category of idle words. Belinde Duval was what the worldly call wise, and what the wise call worldly. The French lady was vain of her tact, especially as exercised on her amiable but weak husband, between whose conscience and his wife's will there was a constant and wearisome conflict.

"I say you must protest," continued Madame Duval; "you must bring your father to reason. I am a Huguenot myself, so is your good cousin my husband; but, as I tell him, Huguenot zeal must be tempered with common sense. One cannot put one's head into the mouth of a cannon. There is such a thing as accom-

modating oneself to circumstances. See, here is my fan" (madame again opened the pretty bauble, carried for ornament rather than use, to help her in illustrating her meaning). "On one side are painted high-born shepherds and shepherdesses, dancing round fountains and holding garlands of roses; the other side is simple sky-blue silk. If I am in a gay assembly, the shepherds and their *chères amies* dance at their pleasure; if I am listening to a pasteur's sermon, I turn the celestial colour to the light; and when cold, miserable winter comes with its storms—shut up fan!" (she suited the action to the word); "there is nothing to be seen but the ebony sides." Madame Duval laughed at her own illustration.

"Cousin Belinde, I am in no humour for jesting, my heart is too heavy," sighed Adéle.

"I do not wonder at that; you have enough to make you *désolée!*" exclaimed Madame Duval. "The very idea of flying from this beautiful home, of going beyond reach of visits to charming Paris, of being exiled to dreadful England, with its horrible climate, where the air is thick as pea-soup, and the sun is seen so seldom that men take off their hats to him when he appears—the very idea is too shocking to be entertained for a moment! I should be stifled in England, *désolée;* I should die of ennui." The lady raised her shoulders and cast up her eyes, to express a shuddering sense of

utter misery. "And you, *ma petite*, have been born to such a very different fate; your name, your ancestry, give you such a prestige. You remember, I doubt not, Madame la grande Dauphine's visit to the château, when she was making her tour in Normandy; how she patted your curly head, and said that you and Louis made the prettiest pair that she ever had seen, and that you must both come to her at Paris. What an opening!" ejaculated Madame Duval; "what would not I give for my Felicie to have such a chance of making her way at court! But she has not your antelope eyes, nor is her father a marquis. You have such brilliant prospects before you; and so has Louis—why, he might be appointed page to the king!"

"We must not think of these things," said Adéle bitterly; "they can never be; I ought not to wish them to be."

"Oh! the very good little *mignonne* will not even look at the sugared cake which papa puts out of her reach on the shelf! But tell me the truth, *ma petite*—if by taking that rose out of your bodice and placing it on yon table you could change your father's rigid views, and make him see things in a sensible way, tell me, would you not do it?"

Adéle flushed, and laid a hesitating hand on the rose.

"And would not Louis?" said Madame Duval.

"Louis would do thus!" exclaimed Adéle; and sud-

denly throwing down the rose, she trampled it under her foot.

"*Bravo!* quite sensational! what an actress you would make!" cried her cousin, laughing; "Madame Maintenon should secure you for her private theatricals."

"Hark!" exclaimed Adéle; "do you not hear the trampling of horses?"

"I suppose that the marquis is returning," said Madame Duval rising; "and I must take my departure, for I expect some visitors at home." She went to the window and looked out. "There is my chair waiting; pray make a thousand apologies to my cousin the marquise. I heard that she was making preserves in the still-room, so I came for a *tête-à-tête* with you."

Then followed embraces, carefully given by the elder lady, who feared to disarrange her false hair, and rather coldly received by the younger. Adéle quite understood why Cousin Belinde cared little for the society of the marquis and his wife: there was nothing in common between them. Adéle accompanied her visitor down the broad oaken staircase, and saw Madame Duval enter the gay, fanciful sedan-chair, which often in those days took the place of the cumbrous family coach. With a waved salute, the lady was borne away by two liveried servants. Almost at the same moment a party of horsemen, amongst whom the marquis was the central and most striking figure, emerged from a thickly-wooded part of the park.

## CHAPTER II.

### PREPARING FOR THE ORDEAL.

THE Marquis la Force was a man of noble presence, especially when mounted, as he now was, on a spirited charger, which he managed with graceful ease. The steed knew that the hand on the rein was that of a master, and obeyed the slightest movement. La Force had passed middle age, but was still in the full strength of vigorous manhood. His features were fine, but more remarkable for the expression of calm repose upon them than for mere statuesque regularity. The marquis's appearance was not marred by the huge wig then usually worn by men of the upper classes. La Force had a settled dislike to everything false: the brown hair, lightly streaked with silver, the moustache and pointed beard were such as we see in portraits of gentlemen of the preceding generation, when the sword was more often in the hand than the snuff-box, and luxury had not made effeminate courtiers of the descendants of warriors.

Beside the marquis rode Jacques Duval, the son of the noble's sister. The nephew was a contrast in appearance to the uncle. Duval looked much shorter than La Force, even though the redundant wig under his laced cocked hat rendered the difference less conspicuous. A huge cravat encircled a short thick neck, and made it look shorter and thicker. The face above that cravat was pleasant, honest, and kindly; but the lips, full and usually slightly apart, had none of the expression of calm determination seen on those of the uncle. It was evident, also, that Duval had little command over his horse. The animal's fidgety movements disturbed him, and sometimes interrupted the conversation which he was carrying on with his uncle as they slowly approached the château.

"Yes, yes, you are right, you are always right; I am entirely of your opinion," said Jacques Duval: "it is better to lose anything, to sacrifice everything, than to violate conscience. I intend to signify to his Majesty that I am going to do what you do."

"Not as I do, but as our God commands," said the marquis. "Neither of us can, as Huguenots, conform to a form of worship which we regard as idolatrous."

"Surely not, surely not," said Duval, stooping nervously to pat the neck of his restless horse; "but—but—;" the poor man kept his eyes on his steed, avoiding meeting those of his companion as he

added, "in some ways my difficulties are greater than yours."

"How so?" asked the marquis. "Your property is chiefly in hard cash, much more easily removed than my house and acres, which are pretty certain to fall into the hands of some favourite at the court. Besides, you have artistic talent, which would of itself secure you from all risk of serious privation."

"I have a wife and daughter," murmured Jacques.

The marquis might have said, "So have I," but he did not utter the sentence, nor put his nephew to the humiliation of explaining the difference between the two families.

"I am not sure—I do not think—that Madame Duval would go with me if I went into exile," said Jacques.

"Madame Duval could not choose but go with you," observed his uncle, "unless you were to settle a separate allowance upon her, which you would not be so unwise as to do."

"Madame is very much opposed to my resisting the king's will," said Jacques, with a piteous look on his face.

"My nephew, it is right to show a wife every consideration—every kindness consistent with our duty to God," observed the marquis; "but no husband must abdicate the position which he holds by the highest authority; he must not drop the rein which God has

placed in his hand; he must not make a woman's will his law; he must serve the Lord himself, and do his best to make his family serve the Lord also."

"Quite right, quite right," said Duval; "I always thought as you did. I will do my best to persuade Madame Duval. Ah, that's her chair! I must hasten after her. Madame always likes to have my protection when she passes through that part of the forest where she apprehends danger from robbers. Adieu, my dear uncle; we will talk over these matters when we meet again at supper. I will think over your good advice—I will—." If anything was said to complete the sentence, the words were lost in the clatter of the horses' hoofs, as the sward was exchanged for the harder road.

"Think of, but perhaps not act upon it," thought La Force sadly, as he rode up to the massive portico of his dwelling. At the top of the wide steps which led up to the open door stood his wife, the marquise, to welcome him. Elizabeth la Force was a fair and comely dame, of some thirty summers of age. Her demeanour was calm and serene; the prevailing impression left on the mind of a stranger by the sight of her face was that she was a woman of good sense, devoid of *hauteur* but not of a certain quiet dignity. A shrewd observer, however, would notice certain slight lines on the broad brow and near the mouth, which indicated care, and

possibly something of temper. There was nothing peculiar in the dress of the marquise; only the criticising eyes of the woman of tact would have noticed it at all.

A little behind the marquise stood Adéle, with an unwonted cloud on her youthful brow. Her face did not light up with the sunny smile with which she usually met her father.

The manners of that age were more formal than those of the present. More stately etiquette was observed in the households of *grands seigneurs*. The marquis's servants drew up in two lines on the steps to receive their master, and low were the reverences made as, after dismounting, he passed them and reached the little platform on which the ladies were standing. La Force's reception by his wife and daughter was little less formal; though when the marquis had passed with them through the wide hall, and reached the oaken staircase, he was leading his lady with his right hand; and Adéle, in defiance of etiquette, had both of hers clasped around his left arm. La Force, who was a very fond father, always gave his daughter the privilege of a petted child.

Not a word was spoken until the marquis, having crossed the gallery at the head of the staircase, entered the spacious saloon in which we first found Adéle and her cousin. La Force seated himself in one of the

heavy arm-chairs which bore the escutcheon of his ancestors emblazoned on the back. Elizabeth, who watched the looks of her husband and saw that a weight was on his mind, silently took a lower seat near him. Adéle threw herself on a footstool, rested her clasped hands on his knee, and looked inquiringly up into his face. Neither she nor the marquise ventured to ask the question which was uppermost in the mind of each. La Force gently stroked his daughter's dark locks, and then began the conversation in a voice calm, but not altogether free from a tone of sadness.

## CHAPTER III.

### SUBMISSION.

"I DO not like to take any important step in which the interests of my dear ones are involved," said the marquis, "without making them partners in my cares. If a sacrifice is to be made, let us make it together; I ask no one to go forward blindfold in the track which Providence has marked out for me. Elizabeth, Adéle,—you know of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, that charter of Huguenot freedom. You know that the only choice left in France for those who hold a pure faith is between apostasy and exile. The choice has been offered to me.—Elizabeth, you have from the first known my decision,—you have expressed a willingness to follow my fortunes."

"Where thou goest, I will go; where thou diest, I will die," said the lady of La Force, using almost unconsciously the familiar words of Scripture.

The husband turned on his partner such a look as might have rewarded a wife for any loss of fortune or

position. Adéle saw the look, and it raised bitter feelings in her young heart.

"It is easy for her to go to England, it is her own land!" cried the girl impatiently; "but I was born in beautiful sunny France, I have lived all my life in this home of my fathers—it would be anguish to leave it!" The dark eyes were full of tears; they trembled on the lashes, then coursed fast down Adéle's cheeks.

"I am ashamed of your want of regard for your father's feelings," said Elizabeth rather severely. "He has enough to suffer without his daughter adding to his burden by her childish complaints."

The remark nettled Adéle, all the more because it was edged by truth. The glance which the young maiden turned on her step-mother was one of hardly disguised anger. Almost fiercely Adéle cried, as, dashing the tear-drops aside, she sprang to her feet, "I love my father—none loves more than I do; no one need tell me how to behave towards *him!*"

"Child, you forget yourself," began Lady la Force; but the marquis silenced her by a look, and rising, he took his daughter's hand and led her to a remote part of the saloon, where tapestry covered the wall. It was distressing to the Huguenot to have anything like divisions in his family, and especially when all should unite more closely to resist a coming storm. La Force was a man of too much perception not to be aware that there

was no strong love between his daughter and his wife. Adéle, a spirited, wilful child, who had had little early discipline, had by no means welcomed the coming of one who would counsel and restrain her, and exercise maternal authority over a headstrong girl. Any foolish prejudice, however, might in time have worn away—for Elizabeth's character was one to win respect, and she had a kindly heart under a reserved manner—but for the evil influence of Madame Duval. That lady's pleasure was to set her young cousin against her natural protectress, to hold up the marquise's manners, accent, and dress to ridicule in her step-daughter's presence. Especially Belinde Duval dwelt on Elizabeth's unpardonable fault—that of being of English birth. Adéle was encouraged to hate and despise everything belonging to what the Frenchwoman called "the island of fogs." Its people were talked of as little better than barbarians, brutal savages who had risen up against their king, tried him, and brought him to the block! To the enthusiastic Adéle it was almost as great a crime in the English to have won the battles of Agincourt and Cressy. The girl's favourite heroine was Joan of Arc; Adéle's day-dream was to emulate that martyr to love for her country. The English and their descendants were never to be forgiven for having had a share in the cruel injustice which had brought on the Maid of Orleans a terrible fate. Adéle had too much respect for her father,

too much fear of incurring his displeasure, to let her feelings towards the marquise often find vent in his presence; but she harboured them in her heart, and gave only too ready a hearing to the ill-natured jests of Madame Duval.

La Force stood before the tapestry hangings with his hand on his daughter's shoulder. Raising his eyes toward the heirloom he said calmly, "This is one of the things to be left behind."

"O father—never!" exclaimed Adéle. "The tapestry has been in our family ever since the days of Saint Louis!"

"We shall take something from it which I hope we may never leave behind," was the quiet reply. "The subject of this tapestry picture has been familiar to you, Adéle, ever since you were able to distinguish your right hand from your left."

"It is the history of Abraham," said Adéle, surveying the still rich though somewhat faded hangings. The tapestry was divided by arabesque borders into three compartments, representing Abraham going forth at God's command, the patriarch kneeling in prayer, and his preparing to sacrifice Isaac.

"Here," observed the marquis, "we have pictured before us faith, prayer, and obedience. Abraham has been dead for thousands of years (if saints can be said to die), but still his example lives, and shall live till

time shall be no more. Think you, my Adéle, that it was easy to the patriarch to renounce idolatry in a land where all worshipped graven images? Think you that it was easy to him to go forth, not knowing whither he went, turning his back for ever on home and friends and all that was associated with happy thoughts of his childhood?"

"No," was Adéle's scarcely audible reply.

"And did Abraham make a wise or a foolish choice, my daughter, when he went forth casting himself submissively, trustfully, entirely on the promise of his God?"

"He did wisely; he found a blessing," murmured Adéle.

"And in him all the families of the earth are blessed, even all who are made Abraham's children by sharing his faith.—My child, do you not desire to become a daughter of Abraham? If so, you must quit the land of idols."

Adéle heaved a sigh. "I will give up everything," she faltered.

"*Everything*, my child?" said the marquis. "Consider the full meaning of your words. You must give up not only house and lands, not merely pleasures and amusements, but the proud spirit, the rebellious will; these, by God's grace, must be left behind if you would inherit the blessing. You were just now disrespectful to your mother."

Adéle's heart was very full; again her eyes brimmed over with tears; the most gentle rebuke from her father always cut her to the soul.

La Force waited for an answer, and an almost inaudible one came at last. "I am sorry," said the girl, drooping her head.

"Go and tell your mother so," said the marquis.

There was a painful struggle between obedience and pride. But Adéle felt a gentle pressure on her shoulder, and that pressure was more powerful to subdue her wilful spirit than the most forcible arguments would have been. With slow step and downcast eyes the young maiden returned to the place where the English lady was sitting. Faintly, hesitatingly, the words, "I am sorry," came from the reluctant lips.

Elizabeth silently kissed her step-daughter's glowing cheek; and Adéle, half mortified and half relieved, went away to a small side-table, and occupied herself in turning over the leaves of an English book which lay upon it. The volume was the "Pilgrim's Progress," a work then comparatively modern. Elizabeth had brought it amongst the very few things which she had taken with her from the land of her birth.

La Force and his wife conversed together on necessary business connected with their departure;—what property was portable and valuable enough to be carried with them; and what arrangements should be made for a

voyage across the Channel in the seventeenth century —not so easy of accomplishment as in the nineteenth. Adéle listened sadly, for she did not take in the meaning of a single sentence in the book before her, though she had some acquaintance with English.

Presently a splendid greyhound, with a silver collar, came lightly bounding into the room. Adéle was glad of the interruption.

"Ah, Qui-vive!" she cried, patting and caressing the beautiful creature which licked her hand; "you are happy, you have no troubles! What a welcome you will give your young master Louis when he comes back from his school! You will see him in three weeks from this day."

"I hope that Qui-vive will see him to-morrow," said La Force.

"To-morrow!" exclaimed Adéle, with a cry of delight. "O father! then you have sent for him: what a joyful surprise! But what brings Louis back so soon?"

"My wish," said the marquis gravely.

"And you never told me!" cried Adéle.

"I thought it more prudent not to mention my intention to any one, except, of course, your mother and faithful Rochet, whom I intrusted with the commission to bring my son. A relay of horses was arranged for, so that Louis might be brought with as little delay as possible. If my boy has not strength for so

long a ride, Rochet has orders to bring him in a horse-litter."

"Oh! Louis will much prefer riding," cried Adéle, whose spirits had risen wonderfully at the news of her brother's coming; though she was secretly mortified as well as surprised that such a secret should have been kept from her knowledge. "Louis is a capital horseman. Oh, what fun we shall have together, off and away through the forest, and over the downs, as far as —yes, as far as the sea! Qui-vive will go bounding before us." The poor girl's countenance fell as another thought struck her, and it was with bitterness that she added, "But perhaps we shall soon neither have greyhound to sport with nor horse to ride!"

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE FLAME SCORCHES.

THE supper, or as we should call it dinner, was served at sunset at Château la Force, and in somewhat stately style. The Duvals were invited guests, and the marquise was careful to give her husband's relatives no occasion to laugh at English ignorance of the art of spreading a table. The venison pasty and the trotter-pie, the delicate confections and the dessert of pippins, barberries, olives, and musk-plums, had been prepared under the immediate superintendence of the Lady la Force. Duval was known not to be indifferent to the pleasures of the table, and his wife was a critic in the culinary art. Elizabeth never suffered her anxieties to interfere with her house-keeping duties.

As the family sat in the saloon, ready to receive their guests, a little perfumed missive was brought to the marquise. "From Belinde, I see," said the lady as she opened the note; and she read it half aloud in a cursory manner: "*Had expected such pleasure. Bad headache.*

*Monsieur Duval will not be persuaded to leave me—I am désolée.—Your devoted Belinde.*"

"Cousin Belinde was here to-day," said Adéle, "and she seemed to be perfectly well."

"Madame's headaches come when they are convenient to herself, and inconvenient to those who have kindly invited her," said Elizabeth, tossing down the note on the table.

"Cousin Jacques might have come,—I like him, he is so genial and kindly," cried Adéle.

"Madame will not let her husband be more at the château than she can help," observed the lady of La Force; and the lines on her broad brow deepened. "It is disgraceful to a man to let himself be so governed by his wife. Belinde would not have treated me thus a few months ago; but she looks on us already as—." La Force stopped his lady's further speech by a glance, as a servant entered the saloon for orders.

"Let the supper be served," said the Lady la Force.

Nothing was wanting at that silent meal except the appetite to enjoy it. The servants took away the dainty dishes almost untouched. There seemed something oppressing the spirit of parents and daughter, like the pressure of the atmosphere when heavy thunder-clouds cover the sky.

The sun's fiery globe had not long dipped below the horizon, when the trampling of several horses was heard.

Adéle sprang up with the joyful exclamation, "It is Louis! come even sooner than we expected."

"Resume your seat; it cannot be Louis," said the marquis.

Voices were heard outside, then a loud inquiry as to whether the Marquis la Force were within, with the ominous addition, "We come in the name of the King." This was followed by the tramp of booted feet; and a servant entering the dining-hall said, "Monsieur le Vicomte de Fontainebleu requests audience of my lord the Marquis la Force."

"Let him come in," said the marquis, rising from table.

Booted and spurred, with jingling swords at their sides, wearing gold-laced coats adorned with large bunches of ribbons, their three-cornered hats in their hands, but heavy wigs on their heads, three gentlemen entered the hall. Careful of the rules of court etiquette, then thought more binding than any law, the three bowed with obsequious respect to the ladies, and then to the marquis, who went forward some paces to meet them.

"I regret the necessity of intruding on you, Monsieur le Marquis," said the Vicomte de Fontainebleu, "but the commands of his Majesty the King leave me no option."

"Before entering on business," said the courteous La Force, "let me request you to partake of some refreshment after your journey."

Elizabeth made signs to her servants to bring back the dishes, and ordered lights.

"Pardon, monseigneur, but I must first fulfil my duty, and place in your hand this reply to your paper." Fontainebleu handed to La Force a large official document, to which a huge red seal was appended. La Force bowed as he received it, with a firm hand broke the seal, and then read the paper with a countenance calm and unmoved. His visitors were keenly watching his face, and so were his wife and daughter.

"It is as I expected," said the Huguenot noble, after perusing the document. "His Majesty rejects my petition: I must either recant or quit France within twenty-one days."

"I hope—I doubt not—that Monsieur le Marquis will conform to the wishes of his Majesty," said the courtier blandly.

"In all that concerns not conscience," was the reply; "but my duty to God must come before even my duty to the King."

"But the ladies—the *demoiselle*," said Fontainebleu, glancing at Adéle as he spoke.

"What the marquis wills, we will," quoth Elizabeth la Force.

"My wife, daughter, and son will be partakers of my exile," said her husband.

Fontainebleu slightly shrugged his shoulders, with

something like a sigh of compassion for the fair victims of stubborn obstinacy. Then in the same courtly manner he observed, "The ladies of the château may go where they list, but his Majesty has graciously made other arrangements for the heir of La Force!"

"Explain yourself, sir," said the marquis sternly.

Fontainebleu avoided meeting the father's anxious eyes as he made reply: "His gracious Majesty, full of benevolence for his nobility, is unwilling to let a youth of fourteen years of age suffer for the—pardon me, seigneur—the contumacy of a parent. The King benevolently takes upon himself the care of young Louis la Force, and will insure his receiving a good education at some Catholic establishment."

"But surely not without his father's consent!" exclaimed the Huguenot noble.

"Such consent is quite unnecessary under the circumstances," said the courtier. "His Majesty regards the spiritual welfare of his young subjects. The matter is not now in our hands: fortified by the royal warrant, we called on our way hither at the seminary where the young gentleman had been placed, and removed him according to his Majesty's command. Monsieur le Marquis's son is now on his way to Paris."

An ejaculation—it was an agonized prayer—burst in a single word from the whitened lips of the father.

It was not loud, scarcely audible—it was such as the rack might have wrung from a martyr.

"Is there no remedy for this? must I be bereaved of my child!" cried the marquis.

"There is a very simple remedy," observed the vicomte bowing. "Monseigneur has only to conform; nothing is required but a declaration, a few masses, and—"

"The loss of a soul," said the Huguenot peer.

"Is this the justice to be found in France!" exclaimed Elizabeth, indignation in her honest blue eyes. "Are children to be torn from their parents, simply because these parents worship God according to conscience! It never was so in England."

Fontainebleu again gave his little shrug, with a corresponding gesture of the hands intended to express his polite regret at the state of affairs which distressed a lady, and his own irresponsibility in the matter. La Force felt that argument or remonstrance was worse than useless, and that it was undesirable that his wife and daughter, who might be unable to control their feelings, should remain in the company of their most unwelcome guests.

"Gentlemen, you will excuse the lady not presiding at the board," he said, as the servants brought back the dinner, with lights which were now required, as evening was darkening into night. "Accompany your mother,"

the marquis gently added, addressing his daughter, who had covered her face with her hands, and bowed it in an attitude of uncontrollable sorrow. Adéle did not wait for the marquise to lead the way, but rushed out of the hall, and her sobs on the staircase could be heard in the room which she had quitted. "Louis! Louis!" were the only words which she could utter between them. Elizabeth, stiffly bowing to the French courtiers, with a slow step quitted the hall.

Fontainebleu and his companions took their seat at the board; and their host resumed his, to do the honours of the table. The courtiers with sharp appetites attacked the viands, and full justice was done to the venison pasty and trotter-pie, while sack and burgundy freely circulated round. Conversation also freely circulated as the repast went on. It, however, touched on no delicate topic. The French gentlemen talked of the last duel, and the last grand ball, the reigning beauty in the circle of fashion, the scenery of the country through which the travellers had passed, the bad accommodation at hotels, and such like matters of comparatively little interest. La Force endured that wearisome meal, which seemed as if it never would end. With a soul full of trouble he forced himself to listen and reply to frivolous questions; he performed the hard duty prescribed by the law of hospitality, mastering his own impatient spirit as he had mastered his fiery steed. It was a

relief when the tedious banquet was ended, when the last glass had been drained to the health of the king. La Force himself conducted the courtiers to their apartments; and then, after exchange of formal courtesies, was able to retire to his own.

Adéle lay awake for hours on her little bed, and then cried herself to sleep. Her father neither wept nor slept. That night was spent by the Huguenot in prayer.

## CHAPTER V.

### BEHIND THE CURTAIN.

ADÉLE awoke with a sense of something painful pressing on her heart, but did not for some seconds realize what the burden was. Recollection came only too soon, and with it a bitterness of spirit bordering almost on rebellious despair. Adéle was utterly unaccustomed to sorrow; life had been to her like a summer's day, and she was wholly unprepared for a storm. The girl could not, like her father, wrap herself up in the thick mantle of faith, and take refuge in prayer from the wild wind and the rushing rain. Adéle's mind was full of one subject, and she could not fix it on religion even when her knee was bent in apparent devotion. "Why does God suffer wickedness to triumph, tyranny to trample down right?" was the question that burned itself into her soul. Adéle had *not* gone into the sanctuary ever open to believers; and she had as yet but little experience of the blessings which Christians find in the track of the veiled angel—Affliction. The idea of Louis, her

only brother, her companion, her pride, being in the hands of a wicked king, to be brought up in a false religion, and separated from his family for ever, was frightful to the affectionate girl. Adéle almost forgot the misery of poverty and exile in this more terrible woe!

The family of La Force had early met for morning prayer, followed by a slight repast. The substantial meal (at which Adéle resolved not to appear) was reserved for a later hour, when the luxurious guests should emerge from their respective chambers; for the courtiers did not, like the La Force family, rise at cock-crow. The marquis used the interval in riding out to see a sick tenant; his wife in arranging household affairs. Adéle could settle to no employment. She wandered disconsolately into the large saloon, and seated herself in one of the deep window recesses, the curtain of which was so hanging as almost entirely to screen her from the view of any one in the room. The saloon was quite empty, or Adéle would not have sought it; but as she sat, sadly looking forth on the park, there was heard the tread of heavy feet coming along the gallery, and the sound of men's voices engaged in light conversation. Adéle would gladly have fled from the saloon, but she could not do so without meeting Fontainebleu and his companions, and she could not endure to encounter their gaze. The young maiden, without

the slightest idea of eaves-dropping, remained in her secret recess, earnestly hoping to escape the notice of the hateful visitors. Adéle had some expectation that the courtiers would descend the staircase, and go to the hall; but no, they entered the saloon.

"Fine place!" remarked Fontainebleu as he came in.

"Four thousand acres attached—I've been questioning the steward—they will bring in a fine revenue," observed some one, in a voice deeper and harsher.

"*Ma foi!* Lepine, you are always thinking of the louis-d'or!" cried a third: "I warrant me you'd farm out the Champs Elysée if you had a chance, and sow turnips around the palace of Versailles. I say, this is a capital place for hunting. I hope, Fontainebleu, you'll invite me here. We'll bring down many a buck, and perhaps have a chance of rousing a tusker in the forest!"

"You'll not recognize the château, Perrot, when you come again." It was Fontainebleu who now spoke. "The old place is capable of much improvement. I shall have the staircase painted and gilded."

"O you Goth! you Vandal!" exclaimed young Perrot. "Would you paint and gild polished oak?"

"It's so gloomy, you can't light it up. And what say you to a few gods and goddesses painted on this ceiling, showering down roses on gay dancers below?"

"You would have to take down the pictures first—

they would be incongruous," observed Lepine, the elder courtier. "But they're well painted—uncommonly well painted; I think that they would fetch their price."

"Yes; and that faded old tapestry too."

Adéle could endure to hear no more. Like a wounded young leopard she sprang from her curtained recess and faced the three courtiers, who were startled at her sudden appearance. Adéle's face was flushed, her small hand clenched, and her dark eyes were flashing with anger.

"And who are you—robbers!" she exclaimed in a voice hoarse with passion, "that you dare thus to appropriate the property of my father, the Marquis la Force!"

The three courtiers bowed low, perhaps in mockery, possibly in pity; and Fontainebleu made reply, with a little hesitation in his manner,—

"Mademoiselle has not yet heard that his Majesty has appointed me, his unworthy servant, to take over charge of the château and estate when the marquis quits the place."

Adéle la Force heard no more; she fled from the saloon, and sought her own apartment, where she flung herself on the bed in an agony of mingled anger and grief. She heard the gong sound for breakfast, but she moved not. The girl did not rise from her tear-wetted pillow, until sounds from below assured her that the courtiers were taking their departure at last. Then,

indeed, Adéle slowly went to her casement, and watched the emissaries of the oppressor as they mounted their horses, and then bent low from their saddles, and waved a formal adieu to the master and mistress of the house to which they had brought such sorrow. Adéle hardly breathed till the courtiers, with their mounted followers, had disappeared behind the trees.

The days that followed were very painful. La Force addressed a most touching letter to the monarch of whose throne he and his ancestors had been a bulwark. Bertrand asked for nothing but his child, complained of nothing but separation from his only son. The letter received no reply. Each member of the family wrote to Louis; but from him, too, no answer came. Even if—as was doubtful—the letters ever reached him, he was probably not allowed to write in return.

There were needful cares connected with leaving the estate. Whilst the marquis rode from cottage to cottage, the lady of the château was full of work at home. It needed much thought to select, from property accumulated by successive generations, what should be carried away. To this unpleasant work an additional element of pain was added by constant disagreements in opinion between Elizabeth and Adéle. The marquise, a practical woman, who had been accustomed to rigid economy in her childhood's home, in selecting articles to take with her, naturally chose such as were portable and

of intrinsic value—those that might readily be turned into money. Adéle set her heart on carrying off heavy suits of armour, fraught with family interest. To this Elizabeth strongly objected.

"I would rather leave anything behind than this precious sword!" exclaimed Adéle. "Do you not know that it was grasped in the dead hand of a La Force at Ivri, and that from this incident King Henry gave to our family the crest of a hand holding a sword, with the motto 'Faithful unto death!'"

"I must make a concession in favour of that sword, for your father values it," said the marquise; "the crest and motto are carved on the back of our chairs."

"And the crusader's cuirass?"

Elizabeth shook her head. "Neither that nor his spear and shield."

Adéle could not suppress her indignation. "Of course we shall take all the pictures, and the dear old tapestry," she cried.

"Certainly the family portraits, but without the heavy frames. To take the cumbrous mass of tapestry is entirely out of the question."

"You have no feeling"—

"You have no sense"—were on the lips of matron and maid, when happily the entrance of the marquis put a stop to the unseemly dispute.

## CHAPTER VI.

### A BATTLE AND A TRIUMPH.

A YET more painful struggle was going on in Courville, the country house in which the Duvals passed the summer months, living during the rest of the year in their mansion in Paris. It was a struggle between a weak, conscientious man, and the selfish, imperious woman to whose will he had habitually yielded his own. Night and day the struggle went on, Felicie, a flighty, shallow-minded girl, throwing all her weight into the scale of opposition to her pious father. Jacques, the most good-natured, kindly of men, found himself regarded as a tyrant. Sometimes he had to endure the sight of fits of hysterical weeping, which wrung his tender heart. More frequently he was overwhelmed with bitter reproaches. Duval hardly knew which tried him most—the blasts of anger, or the deluge of tears. Head and heart ached with sorrow; the poor Huguenot lost appetite, lost flesh—his home was a purgatory to him.

The struggle could hardly have lasted but for the strong support given to his nephew by Bertrand la Force. The marquis argued with Duval, prayed with him, stirred him up to play the part of a man. Often they paced together the straight, formal walks of the garden at Courville, where "each alley had its brother," and the very trees seemed to grow according to rule. A fountain in the centre spouted up its waters through the horn of a Triton. It was in one of those walks that the following conversation took place:—

"What! would you yield to a woman's love of the world?" exclaimed the Huguenot noble. "If you give way, you sacrifice your wife and your daughter; you throw them into the midst of temptations which you know that they cannot withstand. For their sakes, as much as for your own, stand out, and choose exile rather than yield one inch in a matter of conscience."

"I would gladly embrace exile—I would go to England, Labrador, the ends of the earth—to keep true to my faith!" cried poor Jacques, his eyes filling with tears; "but I have been in all things so accustomed to consult, or rather to leave all things to the management of my wife, that it is now inconceivably difficult to me to oppose her will."

"My dear nephew"—La Force laid his hand on the arm of Duval as he spoke—"in God's own Word it is written that the husband is the head of the wife. If

the head habitually stoop to a lower place than that assigned to it by its Maker, what, in the physical frame, is the result? The beauty, the dignity of the form is lost altogether, and the health of the whole body is injured."

Duval, with his eyes on the ground, sadly murmured assent.

"No woman," continued the marquis, "can perfectly love a husband to whom she cannot look up. Conjugal affection is given to us as the type of the highest, holiest of unions, even that between Christ Himself and His Church. Do not we Protestants see in this unhappy land the fearful consequence of what is called the Church usurping the place of her Lord?"

Madame Duval, who greatly disliked to see her husband engaged in conversation with his uncle, came out to interrupt it. Belinde had strained every nerve to prevent Duval from visiting the château; but she could not hinder the marquis from coming to Courville. She indeed no longer gave him a flattering welcome. La Force was no more the aristocratic connection of whom Madame Duval was proud; he was the ruined man who had lost all chance of helping on her interest at court. Madame openly, and before others, insulted the marquis, who was too polite to retort. If she could not prevent his visits to Courville, she could at least make them so bitter that he would not care to repeat them.

"See, Monsieur le Marquis," she cried, as she met La Force on the terrace—"see what comes of your obstinate self-will! Had you conformed, had you made a few trifling concessions, you might have kept your only son under your influence still." The woman of tact knew where the sting of her malice would strike the most tender place. "Now you abandon the care of his up-bringing to men whom, in your superior sanctity, you look upon as godless reprobates; or priests, whom you regard as blind idolaters. Your son will either become a profligate at the court, or, if you like the idea better, a shaven monk prostrate at the shrine of St. Mary."

"Belinde—my dear!" exclaimed Jacques in an expostulating tone, which was intended to convey a rebuke.

La Force pressed his lips tightly together to keep in the burning words almost on his tongue. All that he said aloud was, "Madame, Louis is in the hands of God, not of man," as he turned away.

It indeed cost La Force a great deal to persevere in visits to Courville; but he was not a man to count the cost. He felt that his nephew's soul might be at stake, and therefore often turned his horse's rein in the direction which of all others he was most inclined to avoid.

Thus the days, so full of trial, rolled on. Even the most tedious and trying come to an end at last. When

the time appointed for the Huguenot's departure drew nigh, Madame Duval's opposition to the wishes of her husband slackened, then actually ceased, though not her bitter complaints. To her husband's inexpressible relief, Belinde seemed to have given up the contest. Duval was able to make arrangements for accompanying the marquis and his family in their flight to England; a fishing-smack was hired to convey the whole party across the Channel. Madame Duval could not stay behind without her husband's money, as she possessed none of her own, so must perforce accompany him, however unwillingly. Dresses and jewels were accordingly packed up; but Duval noticed that his wife's preparations were not on so large a scale as was required for a complete transplantation from one country to another.

"Surely, *mon amie*, you will require to take much more with you," observed the good man. "Madame Elizabeth has been doing nothing but packing for the last ten days, and a waggon-load of heavy luggage went yesterday from the château."

"My brother will send after us anything that we want," replied Madame Duval.

"But surely that will be difficult, troublesome, and expensive; remember the risk of transporting luggage across that rough sea. Had we not better take more with us to England?" suggested the husband meekly.

"I suppose that blankets and warming-pans can be

bought in the foggy island," was Belinde's tart reply as she turned away.

The momentous morning of departure arrived. A large travelling coach, drawn by six horses, was at the portico of Courville, and servants were busily employed in piling the top with luggage and thrusting articles into the boot. Felicie sat on a trunk looking wonderfully cheerful and humming a tune, which made her father call her a brave, good girl: she giggled a little at the praise. It had been arranged that the conveyances of the La Forces and the Duvals should meet at an appointed hour at a place where four roads met, so that no time might be lost by either party going out of the way. The two families would then proceed on their journey together.

Duval stood in his hall watching and directing his servants: it was a matter of self-gratulation to him that all was clear before him at last. Jacques had not, like his uncle, the pain of leaving an ancestral home, Courville being only a hired house, and so full now of unpleasant associations that poor Duval never wished to see it again.

Madame, attired for her journey, came up to her husband. He avoided looking at her; he almost felt as if acting a cruel part towards his wife. If Jacques had won a victory, none of a conqueror's feelings of triumph were in the kind man's heart.

"Speak to me for a few minutes in the library," said Madame Duval.

"One struggle more," thought Jacques, as he submissively followed his formidable wife.

Belinde motioned to him to take a chair, and sat down beside him. "Now for the last battle," thought Duval. "Would that we were fairly on our way!"

Madame cleared her throat with a little cough, before she began in a tone much more mild than her husband expected.

"I have made a great sacrifice for you," said Belinde.

"Great, great, *mon amie*," responded Duval.

"I have consented that we should never part from each other. But if we *could* have kept together and remained in France, without your having to change your religion, would you not have stayed with me here?"

"Of course, of course," was the hastily uttered reply.

"Then it is nothing but the fear of being forced to renounce your faith that makes you depart?" Belinde was eagerly, anxiously watching the averted face of her husband as she asked the question.

"If I could stay, without giving up my religion, of course I would do so, in deference to your wishes, *mon amie*."

"Then you promise me—you give me your word of honour—that if you can remain without becoming a Catholic, you will?"

"I promise, for the thing is impossible," said Jacques.

It was with a look of triumph that Madame Duval opened an official-looking document, of which she had already broken the seal. The crabbed signature of the unscrupulous prime minister of Louis XIV. was easily recognized by Duval.

"Read this," cried Belinde; "or stay, I will save you the trouble;" and she read aloud as follows: *As a special indulgence from his Majesty, Monsieur Duval is permitted to reside in Paris without renouncing his heretical errors, on the single condition that no meetings for seditious or religious purposes be held in his house.*

Jacques was thunderstruck at this most unexpected turn to the course of affairs. He took the paper into his own hand and read it.

"Is it not clear?" asked Belinde.

Duval only nodded his head.

"And have you not pledged your solemn word that we shall keep together if you are not forced to recant? I am going to Paris; you must go with me, or you are a perjured man."

"How did you obtain this paper?" asked Jacques in an agitated voice.

"I told you that I had made a great sacrifice, and my words were true. In procuring this indulgence, I had the wit to work through a woman. My sapphire necklace adorns the neck of the minister's wife."

## CHAPTER VII.

### LAST FAREWELLS.

Since the marquis had received the royal mandate to depart within twenty-one days, a great change had taken place in the weather, before so warm and bright. A touch of early frost in the beginning of October had suddenly changed the aspect of nature, and clothed the trees of the park in garments of yellow, crimson, and brown. To the aching heart of Adéle their beauty spoke only of death and decay. The showers of leaves which the soughing wind sent whirling to the ground seemed to her emblems of withered hopes. Adéle wandered for hours in the forest, revisiting each spot most beloved, and carving her initials on the bark of some of the trees. Sometimes, seated on a gnarled root, the poor girl wept passionately for her brother. Adéle, on her return to the château, would feel impatient when she beheld her step-mother, wearing an apron and with no lace on her sleeves, packing delicate articles with her own hands, or giving orders to the servants, who

were turning the former order of the place into what appeared to the eyes of the girl only dust, disorder, and confusion.

"My step-mother thinks of nothing but common household arrangements," said Adéle to herself, with a feeling approaching to contempt.

The youthful maiden was wrong. Elizabeth was thinking first of her husband. Her busy efforts were to save him trouble. His comfort was the object which his wife had ever in view: La Force should have no care about minor matters from which her active love could save him. Elizabeth worked on vigorously in spite of fatigue. She looked serene (at least in her husband's presence), notwithstanding the pain at her heart. For Elizabeth grieved over the loss of Louis, though she did not weep violently like his sister. What Adéle took for want of feeling was really consideration for the feelings of Bertrand. "My step-mother is quite happy at the thought of going to England; leaving the dear old château is nothing to her," thought Adéle. Again the girl was utterly wrong. Elizabeth dearly loved her beautiful dwelling, the only residence in which she had known domestic peace. For Elizabeth's early years had been full of trial. Her father, a hard, penurious man, had made his house a dull prison to his children. With a strange perversion of mind, Mr. Page had regarded Elizabeth, his eldest daughter, almost with dislike. He

chose to consider her extravagant; and when he became a widower, and housekeeping devolved on his first-born, by no possible effort which Elizabeth made could she please a peevish, unreasonable man. Every meal was imbittered by reproaches, every morsel seasoned with gall. When La Force took his portionless bride from a home undeserving of the name, Elizabeth was like a caged bird set free to spread its wings in the sunshine. These early trials, to which she never alluded, had sobered, matured, and ripened her spirit; and relief from their pressure had added the element of fervent gratitude to a deliverer, to the loyal love which was borne to a husband. The years spent at the château had been to Elizabeth beyond comparison the happiest years of her life, and she was greatly attached to the place. Elizabeth had also her secret anxieties regarding the future. She doubted how her generous, open-handed husband would bear the trial of comparative poverty, and how he would agree with a man so utterly unlike him in everything as was Mr. Page, her father.

But Madame la Force kept these troubles and anxieties to herself. Adéle had often complained that her step-mother did not understand her; she might with much more truth have said that she did not understand her step-mother. Adéle compared her own sensibility with the supposed coldness of a stronger nature, and prided herself on what was actually selfishness under a specious disguise.

On the morning of departure the marquis and Elizabeth were in the hall ready to start at the moment appointed. Adéle only was missing. Her step-mother was annoyed at time being lost in search for the girl, as it was like prolonging a painful operation which the marquis had to endure. La Force was anxious to be off, lest the Duvals should reach the place of rendezvous before his party. After Adéle had been vainly sought for in her own apartment and in the saloon, she appeared at last on the drive, her eyes swollen with crying, after a sad parting with her pony, her white doe, and her doves; a parting which she now renewed with her favourite Qui-vive, throwing her arms round his neck, kissing him, and weeping.

The marquis read impatience on the face of his wife. "Do not chide the poor child," he gently said; "she has enough to suffer already."

It was at the last difficult to depart, so many tenants, servants, neighbours, and friends had come for a last look, a last shake of the hand of the man whom they regarded as the noblest in all the province of Normandy. At length the marquis mounted his white steed. The beautiful creature had already been sold; but his new master was to receive him where the four roads met—the place appointed for the rendezvous with the Duvals, at the foot of a small hill, surmounted by a windmill. For the last time the marquis gave the shake to the

rein which was the signal to his obedient steed to bound forward; then turning, La Force bent from his saddle to bid a long farewell to his friends. He avoided glancing up at the castle; it was surrendered to God—enough, its owner would cast no "long, lingering look behind."

The ladies took their places in the travelling coach. Adéle abandoned herself to grief, covering her face with her hands. Elizabeth to the last spoke kindly words to those who had come to say good-bye; but it was a relief when the moving on of the cumbrous vehicle left her at length to comparative solitude. The lady then repeated to Adéle a single verse of comfort from the Scriptures; but Adéle did not choose to be comforted. As the attempt to bestow consolation elicited no reply but a sob, Elizabeth settled herself on her seat, and, to Adéle's utter disgust, quietly took out her knitting. "Such an occupation at such a time! no one but an Englishwoman would have thought of anything so heartless!" said Adéle to herself. But Elizabeth had remembered the cold wind which would meet her husband on the waves of the Channel, and she was making a soft, warm wrap to protect him from its effects. As the lady's busy fingers plied the ivory needles, the click-click of which almost drove her step-daughter wild, Elizabeth was repeating to herself verses from the Psalms, intermingled with silent prayers.

The marquis, who rode rapidly, had reached the little hill in half the time taken by the coach. He rode up to the heavy, luggage-piled conveyance.

"There is nothing to be seen of the Duvals," he said to his wife.

"Your nephew is not always punctual, and Belinde is an unwilling traveller. I am not surprised at a short delay."

But the delay was not a short one, and La Force became uneasy.

"They were to have been here at ten, and it is now half-past eleven," said the marquis after some time, looking for the twentieth time at his large gold watch, and then anxiously glancing down the road by which the Duvals were to come.

"I will ride off to Courville myself, and find out the cause of this most inopportune delay," cried La Force. He pressed the sides of his steed and shook the rein: there was no need of whip or spur; the horse galloped off swiftly, as if proud of his rider.

The gate of Courville was soon reached; it was open. La Force passed through the grounds to the door of the villa. The place looked empty and deserted; the blinds were drawn; there was no sign of a travelling carriage, except the deep ruts which its wheels had left on the drive.

"Where is monsieur? where is madame?" asked the rider anxiously of a servant who was lounging about.

"They started two hours ago for Paris," was the reply.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### AN EVENTFUL PASSAGE.

On the evening of that sad day La Force stood, with arms folded, on the deck of a little vessel, watching the receding shores of the land which he had quitted for ever.

"O God, have pity on my unhappy country!" such was the Huguenot's silent prayer. "Save France from the iron hand of tyranny, and let Thy gospel have free course. And oh, do Thou in Thy mercy watch over my only son! Be to him as a father, as for Thy sake he is fatherless upon earth. I commit to Thy holy keeping one who is dearer, far dearer to me than life."

"Guide us, guard us, O Lord," was the quiet supplication of the Huguenot's wife. "Lead us in the right way, for we rest our hopes upon Thee. Uphold my beloved husband in the trials encountered for Thy sake." Then, turning an indignant glance on the land which she was leaving, the Englishwoman said half-aloud: "O guilty France, thou wilt one day repent having cast off from thee thy bravest and best!"

Terribly was the prediction fulfilled when, with no gallant and true Protestants to uphold it, the throne of the descendant of Louis XIV. was overturned with a crash which startled Europe, and the head of the inheritor of his title and name fell into the blood-stained basket! The crimes of a despotism brought on the horrors of a revolution. Louis XIV. sowed the wind, and his family reaped the whirlwind.

"Farewell, dear, beautiful France!" exclaimed Adéle la Force. "With thee I leave all happiness behind!"

"Do not speak thus, Adéle," said Elizabeth, who heard the exclamation; "keep up a brave heart—matters might have been worse."

"They could not be worse than they are—I could not be more wretched than I am!" Poor Adéle had soon to recall these hastily-uttered words.

Elizabeth did not stay to dispute the point; she went down to the small cabin allotted to the family, to make all things as little uncomfortable as she could, in such a narrow space. Then, when bags had been hung up, and the port-hole opened to admit some air and light, when provisions had been taken from the basket, and berths properly arranged, Elizabeth sat down on a trunk, and for awhile gave herself over to thought.

Her reflections were not all painful. Elizabeth was going back to England, dear old England, where Christians had liberty to worship in spirit and in truth,

albeit under a popish king. No *dragonnades* were there; no children were torn from their parents to be brought up in errors which those parents abhorred. Elizabeth also thought of the meetings before her. Her father's unkindness had not destroyed though it had nipped the plant of filial affection. His daughter had not seen him for eight long years, and she yearned for a sight of his and other familiar faces. What a pleasure to see gentle Lilly and loving Bridget again, and friends, faithful though few! Elizabeth had led a secluded life in her early home, but she had been able to pay a few visits, which remained as green spots in her memory. It was during one of these few visits to a chosen friend that she had first met with Bertrand la Force.

Elizabeth felt it a matter for thankfulness that, though her husband had lost his estate and was precluded from drawing from it any revenue, he was in no immediate danger of feeling the pressure of want. The marquis had brought with him a considerable sum in gold, besides family jewels of value. There was something to start with, a prudent management of which might procure needful comforts for the family; the loss of luxuries was not to be regretted. It would be a real pleasure, Elizabeth thought, to show her skill in making the two ends meet, to contrive how far her personal efforts could smooth the path of her exiled lord. The English lady contemplated the possibility of earning

something by her needle to add to the little family store. Elizabeth was full of her plans for the future, when she was aroused in a startling manner from her quiet reflections.

Château la Force being not more than five leagues from the port, the exiles had calculated on embarking but an hour or two after mid-day, and crossing the Channel before night should set in, if the wind blew from the south. But there had been considerable delay caused by waiting for the Duvals, and the roads had been in so bad a state that little remained of daylight before the port was reached. The marquis consulted the skipper of the smack in which his passage was taken as to whether it was necessary to wait till the morning before setting sail.

"We've good moonlight, and the wind in the right quarter," was the seaman's reply; "I'll engage to land all safe and sound at daybreak."

As La Force was unwilling to linger in the port, he accordingly embarked with his family, and one faithful attendant, a Huguenot like himself.

The smack had not accomplished half her course over the heaving waves, when a dull, gray sea-mist fell, blotting out the moon and the stars, and swathing everything like a shroud. Notwithstanding the damp chill, Adéle would not quit the deck, to go down, as she said, to be stifled below. With her arm locked in that of her

father, the girl stood gazing into the mist, which, even had the sun not gone down, would have hidden France from her eyes. Suddenly a large high object loomed through the fog, an object which looked to Adéle like an enormous white wing. There was a loud shout to the steersman, "Helm a-port!" a cry, "She's on us!" and then a violent, terrific shock, which made every plank in the vessel quiver, and almost threw Adéle down on the deck. The bowsprit of the smack had been smashed, her bulwark crushed in: there had been a collision with a larger vessel in the fog.

"Lower the boat!" shouted the skipper; "call all hands—she's sinking!"

"Hold on, Adéle; I must go for your mother," exclaimed the marquis. But as he hastened to find his wife, he met Elizabeth coming quickly up the companion-ladder. She would have known by the shock that something terrible had happened, even if the water had not been rushing into the cabin through a fracture caused by the violent collision.

"What is it?" was Elizabeth's hurried question.

"A vessel has struck us in the fog. Come quickly; I think we are going down."

Already the sailors were lowering the boat. Not a minute had to be lost. The vessel that had borne down on the smack was taking in her sails, and putting out a boat to help in preserving the passengers and crew of

the smaller craft. Adéle, almost too bewildered to comprehend her situation, found herself almost thrown down into a boat, and then, ere the oars had made more than three strokes, caught up again by strong hands and lifted, like a helpless burden, up the side of a larger vessel than that which she had quitted. She was wet, frightened, but safe! Scarcely had all the shipwrecked party been taken up from the boats, when the smack, which had been greatly injured, sank, prow foremost, under the waves! The collision—the escape—had occupied so short a space of time, that the startled passengers felt as if the whole had been but a dream.

The mist was clearing off. The moon's pale orb could be seen, and shed a ghastly gleam on the waves. Adéle gazed bewildered on the bubbles and eddies which showed where the vessel in which she so lately embarked had disappeared, carrying with it all the treasures which the Marquis la Force had been taking with him to England. She could hardly realize that the family had now absolutely nothing but the wet garments in which they were standing.

"Thanks to our merciful Preserver, that which is most precious is safe!" exclaimed the Huguenot noble, with one arm around his wife and one around his daughter.

"But is all—all gone?" cried Adéle excitedly, still gazing on the dark heaving waves. "My mother's

jewels—the pearls which were heirlooms—the plate which our ancestors used and handed down from sire to son—the pictures, the dear pictures which can never, never be replaced—even the sword which was worn at Ivri!—all swallowed up by that horrible sea!"

"We had already lost what was more precious than gold or jewels," said the bereaved father with a sigh; "and as for the sword, my child, we shall find in the land to which we are bound one more valuable still, the sword of the Spirit—the Word of God."

"Why does God strip us of everything?" impetuously cried Adéle la Force.

The marquis calmly replied in the words of the patriarch Job, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

## CHAPTER IX.

### POVERTY AND PRIDE.

THE heart of old England readily responds to the call of humanity. It is matter of history that a subscription was raised for the Protestant exiles from France, who in tens of thousands sought refuge from persecution after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes.

The La Forces met with the utmost kindness on board the vessel which had been the accidental cause of the loss of their own. Captain, officers, and passengers vied in showing them attention. The same kindness awaited the exiles on their arrival at Dover. No sooner was it known that a Huguenot nobleman and his family, expelled from France by the tyrant Louis, had suffered shipwreck and loss of everything on the voyage, than several respectable burgesses contended for the honour of showing them hospitality. The mayor, William Carden, succeeded in establishing his superior claim to the honour of entertaining the Marquis la Force.

So a cask of ale was broached, huge joints of beef

ordered in—the boar's head was to appear at the head of the table. Even the morning repast was substantial and abundant, though the grand feast was reserved for a later hour. The mayor's wife, a kind-hearted woman, ransacked her wardrobe to bring changes of raiment to the shipwrecked ladies. Elizabeth thankfully accepted for herself and Adéle what was most plain and inexpensive, though not without expostulation on the part of her hostess, who declared that such garments were "not fit for the quality." After the excitement and fatigue of their disastrous voyage the travellers needed rest, but they had to stand the well-meant but trying attentions, and answer the questions of numerous visitors, whom sympathy or curiosity, or both motives combined, brought to the house of the mayor.

"I wish that these good people had the sense to understand that to those in affliction, as we are, it would be a luxury to be left alone!" exclaimed Adéle in French, when there was a brief pause in the stream of visitors.

"It is a luxury which we could only procure by mortifying and disappointing those who are eager to do us service," observed the marquise.

"English are so different from French," murmured Adéle; "of course you do not feel the change as I do. —Ah, another rap at the door!"

The Huguenot family won golden opinions from the

good citizens of Dover. The marquise was declared to be so nice, so free from pride, such a thorough English-woman: the young lady was so pretty and interesting: as for La Force himself, his noble appearance, his perfect courtesy, and the cause of his exile, caused a feeling of enthusiasm in his favour.

This enthusiasm took a very practical form. While the exhausted travellers were at length enjoying a little much-needed repose after a crowded banquet, energetic dames, late in the evening and early in the morning, were hurrying from house to house, from shop to shop, collecting subscriptions in aid of a noble family utterly ruined by their attachment to the Protestant cause. Money was readily contributed, and confided to the hospitable mayor.

Elizabeth was pondering, with some perplexity, in what way she and her party could, without money, accomplish a journey of some thirty miles to the house of her father, when she and Adéle were summoned to partake of a late and very substantial breakfast. As on the preceding day, the mayor and his wife did the honours of the table with kindly but not very refined hospitality. Beakers were filled with foaming ale; the plates of the Huguenot guests were heaped up with more food than they could possibly eat. Adéle, accustomed to French cookery, surveyed almost with disgust the thick beef-steak, somewhat underdone, which was placed before

her, and felt impatient at being urged to eat, when anything like appetite was gone. The mayor and his wife had evidently something on their minds. One or the other now and then quitted the table to go into another apartment, from which the breakfast-room was only divided by folding-doors. There was a sound of perpetual whispering and moving about in this room, heard indistinctly when the thick doors were closed, but very clearly when they were opened for the ingress or egress of the mayor or his wife. It was evident that a great many people were crowded into that room, as if awaiting a reception.

"What is on foot?" thought Adéle. "Cannot these kind English boors leave us alone! It is odious to be made a sight of, as if we were some curious animals brought from the other side of the Channel."

The meal was strangely prolonged after everything like eating was over. Even conversation died down. The mayor was evidently waiting for something, and fidgeting at delay. The mayoress smiled mysteriously, as if some important secret were in her keeping. The La Forces wished to retire from table, but were chained by the laws of courtesy; hints thrown out were apparently not understood. At last the secret was disclosed. The mayor had for the fifth or sixth time disappeared into the adjoining room; now the folding-doors were thrown open, and the portly man emerged with all the

dignity of the head of a deputation, carrying a scarlet bag, which was heavy with gold. So many men, women, and children pressed in after him, that the breakfast-room was almost instantly filled. Some scrambled up on chairs—two urchins even on the table, to obtain a better view of the marquis and his family, and see the joy with which they would receive the charitable contributions which had been collected with such zeal.

"Moonseer the Marquis," said the mayor, advancing towards his guest, and bowing low his bewigged head, "I have the honour of being selected as"—the good man stammered a little—"of—of being selected as the medium of presenting to our illustrious visitors a bag of—of—the contributions made by the ladies and citizens of Dover—to relieve their—their—importunate need."

The face of the ruined nobleman was suffused with a painful flush, even to the roots of his hair. Almost for the first time in his life the marquis looked embarrassed, and at a loss for words in which to reply. There was no difficulty as regarded language, for the marquis had been for two years in a school in Kent, and spoke fluently in the English tongue. But La Force had never before had charity money forced upon him, and the publicity of the proceeding shocked his delicacy and wounded his feelings. The marquis paused for several moments, then, pressing his hand over his heart, made the following reply:—

"I entreat you, *Monsieur le Maire,* to express our gratitude to our generous English friends, and to believe how deeply I feel their kindness as well as your own. You will increase the obligation by adding the contents of that purse to the contributions already so liberally made for my exiled countrymen." Then, bowing gracefully, first to the mayor, then to the spectators right and left, the peer of France, followed by his wife and daughter, made his way out of the crowded room, and proceeded to that which had been appropriated to his private use. Looks of disappointment and feelings of mortification were left behind them.

"He's a bit too grand," murmured the mayor.

"He'll have to come down," observed a burgess's wife who had been most active in collecting the money.

"Depend on't, the marquis didn't guess that the money in the bag was all gold," remarked a grocer. "It would have been better to have left the silver and copper as they were; he'd have preferred a bigger bag."

"Did I do right?" said the marquis thoughtfully, as he seated himself near a window, after drawing the curtain so that he might not be visible from the street, into which a stream of persons was now issuing from the dwelling of the mayor.

"O father, you could not have done otherwise!" exclaimed Adéle. "We are no beggars asking alms."

"Did I do right?" repeated la Force, his eyes resting, not on his daughter, but his wife.

Elizabeth hesitated for a moment, and then replied: "I think that my lord might have accepted without disgrace that which was given freely and cheerfully—given to God in the person of His servant."

"It was pride, worldly pride in my heart," said the marquis frankly—"pride that made me forget everything but a sense of offended dignity. That pride, like all else, must be given up. I shall learn my lesson in time, I trust," he added more cheerfully, "at least with you, my Elizabeth, for a teacher."

La Force was interrupted by the entrance of Rochet, his faithful Huguenot attendant. The man looked embarrassed, and seemed as if he wished to speak to his lady alone; but Elizabeth had no secrets to hide from her husband.

"What did you get for the brooch, Rochet?" she inquired. The brooch was the sole ornament, except her wedding-ring, which the lady of La Force had been wearing at the time of the shipwreck.

"Only this, madame," said Rochet sadly, "though I went to every jeweller in the town."

"It will be enough to take us to Raven's Nest," quietly observed the lady, as she received the money from the hand of her servant. This little incident was a startling revelation to Adéle of the reality of the poverty

which had come like an armed man upon the family of La Force.

"Rochet," said the Huguenot noble, "remove these silver buckles from my shoes."

"Ah, Monsieur le Marquis!" exclaimed the poor man with a heavy sigh, as he went down on his knees to obey.

"And call me no more by my title; in England I am simply Monsieur la Force."

"O father, you will never drop your name!" exclaimed Adéle; "even the cruel king did not, could not, rob you of that."

"What are titles to the homeless and moneyless?" said La Force with a melancholy smile—"like gilded covers over dishes that have in them no food, to cover their emptiness. There—keep these buckles for yourself, Rochet; would that I had more to give so faithful a servant! I have spoken in your favour to the mayor, who has promised to find for you a good situation in this town. God bless you, Rochet, my friend!"

La Force held out his hand, which the poor servant, still on his knees, covered with kisses and tears.

"Now the sooner we start for the home of your father the better," said the marquis, addressing his wife.

## CHAPTER X.

### A PACKET OF LETTERS.

THERE is no need to describe the reception which Elizabeth and her family met with at the home of her father. A few letters written from Raven's Nest, about ten days after the arrival of the La Forces, will give an idea of the life spent by the exiles under the roof of Mr. Page:—

*From Adéle to Felicie Duval.*

*Ma chère petite Cousine, ma charmante Felicie,*—Oh that I were beside thee now! But as this is impossible, I will not miss an opportunity of writing to thee a second letter, and enclosing in it one for my darling Louis. Ah! will he ever receive it? I am quite sure that thy amiable papa will make every effort to find out where my brother is now. We are desolate on Louis's account, and I think of him day and night.

In my first letter I described our frightful shipwreck, and our reception by the kindly but vulgar burgesses of Dover; so I will not refer to these subjects now. Thou,

*ma mignonne*, wilt be dying to know what I think of Raven's Nest, and the people who dwell therein.

Picture to thyself, *ma* Felicie, a bleak common, over which the east winds blow with such force that the few wretched trees all bend forward in an opposite direction, as if they would run away if not tied by the roots! *Hélas!* I sympathize with the trees, and would fly too, were I not bound as they are. By the side of this common, we dwell in a dull, red-brick house, which has a walled garden—yes, a garden, but not a flower growing in it! One looks out on turnips, potatoes, and onions! Oh, for our parterres and flower-bordered terrace! I do believe that Mr. Page, had he come into possession of such a garden as once was ours, would have turned out roses to put in radishes, and camellias to make room for cabbages. As for the interior of the house, how shall I describe it, but by repetition of the one word—bare—bare—bare! No carpet on floors, no tapestry on walls; some mats, indeed, but so old that one has to guess at their original colours. The furniture is so rickety that one should examine the state of the legs of a chair before venturing to sit down on it. The ancient clock has immovable hands. If a pane of glass happens to get broken, one of the daughters mends it as neatly as she can with paper.

But enough of the house; thou wilt like to hear something about the inmates. These consist of Mr. Page and

his two unmarried daughters, Lilly and Bridget, and a maid-of-all-work (a very old maid indeed). The sisters, poor things, though younger than la marquise, look prematurely old and withered, like plants that have been reared without a gleam of sunshine, in pots no bigger than tea-cups. They are gentle and kindly enough, especially Bridget, but stunted in size, and subdued in manner. I think they could hardly muster up a smile between them. How thou and Cousin Belinde would laugh at their dresses, embroidered with patches, and made in what was doubtless the fashion with housemaids a century ago. I wonder if my lady step-mother would have been like those poor Misses Page, if she had not had the happiness of being transplanted in time to dear, dear Château la Force! She is certainly very superior to the rest of the family, and her sisters simply adore her. Her coming has been a gleam of sunshine to them, poor creatures, streaming through the barred windows of their prison-like home.

But, *ma* Felicie, how shall I describe Mr. Page? The sight of him would fill thee with *affre*. Of course this *Anglais* wears no wig, and the hair which I suppose he once had has been almost entirely starved off his head: I cannot look at it without thinking of a skull. I cannot tell thee the colour of Mr. Page's eyes, for he always wears blue spectacles; but I know well the sound of his voice. It is always harsh and grating,

and is sometimes raised to a loud tone of anger, especially when he addresses the unfortunate Lilly and Bridget, whom their father seems to regard as anvils made to be hammered on. Poor Bridget, in her nervous haste to obey her father's orders, chanced to break a wine-glass, three days ago. She will never hear the end of it! I fancy that Mr. Page was somewhat pleasanter during his wife's lifetime, but avarice and temper have grown with years, till he has become a miserly tyrant.

Thou wilt ask, How does the Marquis la Force get on with a man who in everything is his very opposite? O Felicie, it makes my blood boil to see how that man treats my father, my noble, courteous, chivalrous father. It is not enough that the title of Marquis is dropped (that gave me a pang), but even *Monsieur* is too much. Mr. Page calls a French peer "La Force," without any addition at all, sometimes even dropping the *La.* It almost seems to me as if this *misérable* wanted to pick a quarrel with a guest to whom he grudges his meagre fare, his wretched lodging. It appears that Mr. Page, though a Protestant, holds some different opinions on religious subjects from those held by us Huguenots. I cannot tell thee one bit what his opinions are; but Mr. Page is always trying to argue on these differences, and gets quite angry because not every one can see through his blue spectacles. My father keeps his own quiet dignity, and never loses his temper, but I can see that

his patience is sorely tried. And oh, how my poor step-mother feels when her father insults her husband! She flushes, and looks so much distressed. I need not say that we shall not remain one hour longer than we can help in this horrible Raven's Nest. There is certainly only one raven in it, but he pecks at us all round, pigeons and eagles alike.

I must now leave off, *ma petite cousine*, and write to Louis while my candle holds out. I am committing the crime of using up a whole tallow rushlight, for I am penning this at night. I wonder when I shall see a wax candle again, or a silver candelabra like that which lies at the bottom of the sea. Pray, offer my salutations to your *maman*, with much love to dear Cousin Jacques. Don't let him forget to tell us anything that he can find out about my lost brother. Believe me, *amie chèrie*, thy affectionate, half-starved, and *désolée*

ADÉLE LA FORCE.

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*From Adéle to Louis.*

MY DARLING, DARLING BROTHER,—I do so hope that you have received our letters. What would we not give for one line from you! I am afraid that you may never receive even this. Such a separation rends my heart!

Do you remember your once rather provoking me by saying that I was unjust to our step-mother, and that you thought her nice and good. Louis, you were right;

she *is* good. I do not think that any one could bear herself better under difficult circumstances; and the position is trying indeed. I have often said that no one loves our father as I do; our mother cannot love him *more*, but I think that she loves him *better*. There is a difference, I see it now, between loving much and loving well. There is selfishness in my love, and none in mother's. I give way to my feelings, and that pains my father; his wife never gives him a moment's uneasiness that she can prevent. She bears her worries quietly, and has always a word of cheer for her husband. I never admired her at the château; I cannot help admiring her here. La marquise is like my lost opal ring, which looked dull white, except when held up to the light, when it showed rich tints of ruby and green. Madame's is a very practical kind of religion; it really buoys her up, and keeps her temper sweet under no small amount of trial. Going down into that Valley of Humiliation described in the "Pilgrim's Progress" is very hard work, at least *I* feel it so. I am always tripping and stumbling; but our mother goes down with a quick, firm step. I suppose this is because she is ever looking towards the heavenly city beyond.

You may wonder why we stay in such a place as Raven's Nest. We only stay because at present we have no other place to which we *can* go. Our beloved father is making every possible effort to procure em-

ployment—he—the Marquis la Force—the descendant of heroes! He is out almost all day, seeking for a situation, and returns home looking so pale and so tired; a little disheartened, too, though our father never complains—he always thinks that God knows best. Would that I had such faith! Once my father thought that he had succeeded in finding a place—*such* a place! I blush as I write about it. The peer of France was to engage to sit in a haberdasher's shop from morning till night, to keep accounts about tapes and buttons, and overlook the young men at the counters. For this wearisome, monotonous, I am tempted to say degrading work, a French marquis was to receive less salary than a French cook! But our father was glad to do anything for independence, and madame cheerfully agreed to manage without a servant. (I suppose that she is to be cook, and I housemaid, when we commence our *ménage*.) But even this miserable appointment is not to be had. When all seemed to be arranged, the vulgar-looking head of the firm—I think that his name is Boggins—appeared, and asked for a word with my father. Speaking to the marquis as he might have done to a lackey, this man told him that his "hands" were all ready to strike (whatever that may mean) at the notion of being overlooked by a Frenchman. "So, Force, my good fellow, you must look for work somewhere else." O Louis! Louis! to think of our falling so low!

I must brighten this sad letter by giving you a little incident about our mother—you see I am dropping the "step" at last. I saw her one day ripping off the fine lace from her dress (I need not remind you that our jewels are under the waves). I thought the madame was going to wash the lace, and put it again on her sleeves. But I never saw the lace any more, and the very next day our father had a nice cup of coffee prepared by the hands of his wife. Mr. Page never allows coffee to his guests, nor tea; and father has, I am sure, missed that which refreshes him more than anything else. Somehow, I connected the lace with the coffee, for I had seen a private *téte-à-téte* going on between madame and the clergyman's nice wife, and I fancied, from some words dropped by the latter, that mother had disposed of something through her, our only lady visitor here. My curiosity was awakened, so I said, when madame and I were alone together, "Our cook at the château used to make coffee out of berries roasted and ground; have you the art of making it out of Brussels lace?" La marquise saw that I guessed her little secret, and she gave a pleasant smile. "I wish that I were more like you, *mother*," I said. I had never called her before by that name, though she had told me to do so. To my surprise, the lady took me into her arms and gave me a kiss—a good, hearty kiss, and said (I think that there were tears in her eyes), "Adéle, my

child! this recompenses me for much. Henceforth you and I will face misfortunes together, and help to carry each other's burdens." Was this not nice? I do believe that I shall get fond of the *Anglaise* in time.

*Hélas!* the rushlight has almost burned down to the socket. I must go to bed in the dark. I have not even time to sign my—

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*From the Marquis la Force to Louis.*

My dear Son,—In the uncertainty that this will ever reach you, I will not write much. I would be torn by anxiety for you, surrounded as you are by temptations, did I not commit you to One who is able to save. Stand fast in the faith, my boy; endure hardness, as a good soldier of the Lord Jesus Christ. Your ancestor fell at Ivri grasping his sword to the last—*faithful till death.* Even so, never let go your hold of the Word of God. If the book be taken from you, keep its words in your memory, as steel in the scabbard, ready for use; grasped in the hand of faith, neither man nor devil can withstand it. Be constant and fervent in prayer: to say all in one sentence—*look unto Jesus;* let the look be one of faith, of hope, and of love. The Lord watches the conflict, the King's eye is upon you; He will assuredly give victory to those who trust only in Him. Your loving father, Bertrand la Force.

## CHAPTER XI.

### ALONE IN A CROWD.

WANDERING slowly about the less frequented parts of Paris, listless, as if impelled by neither business nor pleasure, we see the solitary figure of a man. He is well dressed according to the fashion of the period; in faultless symmetry falls each curl of his costly wig; but the face beneath that wig is sad, and the downcast eyes are seldom raised higher than the rich shoe-buckles on his feet. Poor Jacques Duval has aged much during the last twelve months. Though ten years younger than his uncle the marquis, he looks at least as old; for sorrow and humiliation often anticipate the work of time. Duval spends much of the day out of doors; for it is bitter to him to be at home and see going on that of which he cannot approve, yet which he is powerless to prevent. Jacques's presence is no pleasure to his wife; he is regarded rather as an encumbrance, a visible conscience feebly remonstrating with one resolved not to obey its voice. Duval has most bitterly

repented of having suffered himself to be tricked into compliance with the will of his wife.

The evil consequences of that compliance were soon apparent. Madame Duval had had her own way; she had snatched the reins from the weak hand of him who had the right to guide, and now was driving on to destruction. The house in which the Duvals had long resided was changed as soon as possible for one in a more fashionable quarter; and the new dwelling became the scene of perpetual dissipation. Money was recklessly squandered to secure the object of madame's ambition—that of becoming a leader in the *beau monde*. Protestantism was, of course, an obstacle in the way of Belinde's obtaining her object; so she drove over it with scarcely the semblance of hesitation. Jacques remonstrated, entreated, even wept; but in vain. Madame Duval and Felicie were, within a month of their return to Paris, received into the Church of Rome. There was even an affectation of zeal for the religion thus, from worldly motives, embraced. Often was mass attended in the morning when the evening had been given to the theatre or the rout. Felicie's mother was resolved that her daughter should be married to an aristocrat, and so have the much-coveted privilege of entrance into the court circle. For this object Madame Duval unceasingly laid herself out. The peer might be old, blind, profligate, or purse-proud; but he would give his wife

position, and that was what Madame Duval craved, and was determined on having at any price. She was emphatically "of the earth, earthly;" the slave of the world, and bound by its chains.

How inexpressibly lonely was a good, pious man, such as was Jacques Duval, in such an unhallowed home! Often did he ask himself whether it would not be better to follow his uncle to England; but the Huguenot felt that to do so would be to desert his wife and child. He was the only link—alas! but a weak one — between his family and better things. Were he to depart, even respectability might follow honour and conscience.

Though in the Bible the Huguenot found some comfort, it was by no means comfort unmixed; the pages of God's Word being so full of denunciations against the very evils which Jacques had constantly before his eyes. Vain were his protestations against them.

"Papa, why do you interfere with us? We don't interfere with you; you go your way, and we go ours." Such was the pert reply of Felicie to tender counsels from a parent from whom she had never had a harsh look. And these words were from his own child! from her whose birth had caused the father such delight! from her whom he had fondled in his bosom, danced in his arms, and beside whose sick-bed he had offered such fervent prayers! His parental advice was called inter-

ference! The paths of father and daughter were separate indeed: one trod a narrow, thorny one, leading to life; the other, the broad way of destruction.

A few gleams of reflected light sometimes fell on the painful road followed by Jacques Duval, from acts of kindness which he secretly performed. If he was seldom seen in gay assemblies, he was often seen in the dwellings of the poor. If the courtier despised him, the widow blessed him; and Jacques felt that, however lonely, he was not quite useless on earth.

It had been more than a gleam of joy to Duval when he had sent off by private hand, unknown to his wife, a large sum of money to the Marquis la Force. Jacques had done this, as soon as he could find safe means of conveyance, after hearing of the loss of all his uncle's property by the collision at sea. The supply had arrived most opportunely on the very day after the letters given in the last chapter had been penned. The marquis had been greatly touched by the liberality and consideration of his relative.

"What is my lord's intention regarding this money?" inquired Elizabeth somewhat anxiously; for she could not help fearing that her chivalrous husband might send back to Duval the gold which the La Forces so sorely needed. That very morning Mr. Page had ungraciously told his daughter that he could not afford to fill three extra mouths. Bertrand's reply was a relief to his wife.

"I will accept the gift with gratitude to God and my generous nephew; but I will not retain so large a sum. One-tenth will supply our present need, and the remainder I shall invest in the name of Jacques Duval. The kind man may be glad to have it some day; for I cannot believe that the true-hearted Huguenot will stay very long in Paris."

"No, indeed," said Elizabeth earnestly; "surely the Lord will reward poor Jacques for his goodness to us by bringing him safely out of that Sodom."

The following day La Force left inhospitable Raven's Nest. He offered his father-in-law money to pay for the small expense to which he had been put. Poor Elizabeth blushed with shame at a parent's meanness, for Mr. Page clutched at the money.

But let us return to the Huguenot dwelling in Paris.

Duval had a special object in view, of which, under all discouragements, he never lost sight. That object was, to find his young cousin, Louis la Force. Jacques pursued his search cautiously but steadily, yet for nearly a year found it impossible to gain any certain information regarding the youth. Being well known to be a Huguenot, Duval was always a suspected man. Ministers of State would grant him no audience, his letters were returned unanswered—he could neither see nor hear anything of the lost heir of La Force. At last some information came in an unsuspected way.

"For the love of Mary, monsieur, come and see my husband!" cried a thin, worn-out-looking woman, who met Jacques one day at the corner of a street. "My poor Jean—he's a carpenter—fell from a scaffolding a fortnight ago, and has never lifted up his head since. I think he is dying." Tears fell fast from the poor woman's eyes.

"Where do you live?" asked the pitying Jacques.

"Just down yon alley, monsieur. It's a poor place to take your honour to. We only lodge in a garret."

"There was One who lodged in a stable," thought Jacques; and he bade her show him the way to her husband.

A long, dark, dirty stair was ascended, and then the French gentleman entered the small but neat room, in which lay a dying man. Sickness had brought poverty; but the carpenter was no beggar. He did not ask for the relief which his visitor willingly gave. Jacques gave sympathy as well as money. He sat down on the sufferer's pallet and, as his days were evidently numbered, repeated slowly to him some texts from Scripture.

"Sir, you are a Huguenot?" said the sick man.

"I am," was the quiet reply.

"The Huguenots are—God's people," faintly murmured the sufferer. "I served one of them once—the Marquis la Force. He is a good man, if there was ever a good one on earth."

"Yet he is banished from his country—ruined—his only son taken from him," said Duval with a sigh.

"I know where that young gentleman is," the carpenter said.

"You know! Where—where is he?" exclaimed Duval in an excited tone of surprise. "For the love of Heaven, speak! I am the youth's own cousin." The sick man looked strongly interested.

"Monsieur, I know little," he said, "but I will tell you all that I know.—Fauchon, give me a drop of water. Lift me up a little. I must speak while I can." With effort the poor man went on: "I was employed to do some repairs at the Monastery of the Holy Sponge—it is not two leagues from Paris, to the north—"

"I know it, I know it," interrupted the impatient hearer, who feared that the sick man's strength might fail him before he could finish his story.

"I was busy at work on the scaffolding when the prior and monks came in for vespers," continued the carpenter, ever and anon stopping as if to gasp for breath. "With them came — the students who are brought up under their care. Amongst them was one —one unlike the rest. I had not seen him for years, and—he was so much changed! But I knew him at once—he for whom I had made—the rabbit-hutch—the son—yes, yes—the heir of the Marquis la Force."

"Did he see you—had you any word with him?" eagerly asked Duval.

"Monsieur, that was impossible. He never looked up; but—but I kept my eye on him. The service was soon over," said the carpenter faintly; "he went away with the rest."

"Did Louis la Force kneel to the Host?" asked the Huguenot anxiously.

"It was not high mass, monsieur. He—knelt in prayer; but—but I can tell you no more."

"Did he look well—happy?" interrogated Jacques.

But the sufferer could no longer give a reply. His eyes were closed, his strength was exhausted. But he had said enough. Jacques Duval was grasping a clew. He thrust a silver crown into the hand of the carpenter's wife, promised to come soon again, and hastened out of the room.

"I have found him at last!" Jacques joyfully exclaimed, as with quickened steps he descended the dark, rickety stair.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE MONASTERY.

EAGER to make the most of his unexpected discovery, Duval, without returning to his own house, stopped the first empty public conveyance which he met, and bade the driver take him direct to the monastery. Jacques had a handsome coach of his own, but he seldom entered it. Madame Belinde liked to have it always at her own disposal.

The monastery was a building of solid brickwork, gloomy in appearance, and surrounded by walls so high that it conveyed rather the idea of a prison than that of a place devoted to religious uses. Looking between the iron bars of the heavy gate, Duval noticed that the windows, which were small and high from the ground, were strongly grated. The bell which Jacques sounded had a sound so deep and dull that it reminded him of a death-knell. A tonsured monk, with a heavy bunch of keys hanging from his leathern girdle, a bare-footed man, who looked as if he never had smiled or could

smile, answered the summons of the bell. Without attempting to open the gate, the monk, through the bars, asked the stranger what he wanted.

"I wish to see one of the students," said Duval.

"You cannot do so without the permission of the reverend prior," was the reply.

"Let me ask the prior, then. Open the gate. I have a relative here; my name is Duval."

The warder looked critically at the stranger before he decided whether Duval should be admitted or not. But the monk concluded that the wearer of so expensive and faultless a wig must be a gentleman, and possibly connected with the court. Duval quickened the monk's movements, as he was slowly fitting a large key into the lock, by thrusting a piece of gold between the bars. This settled the question regarding the stranger's rank; the key was turned, and with an ominous grating sound the heavy gate swung back on its hinges.

Duval entered a paved court which encircled three sides of the building. Two or three bare-footed monks, with rosaries in their hands, were slowly pacing this court, and paused a moment in counting their beads, to see who it was who had ventured to enter the precincts of their prison. Duval eagerly scanned their faces, but none in the slightest degree resembled that of Louis la Force.

Another minute, and the threshold of the building

was crossed. The interior felt singularly cold, and Jacques shivered as he entered the large gloomy hall. Having traversed this, he was conducted to the private parlour, in which the prior received his visitors. The only ornaments of this room were a large crucifix, and a painful picture of the martyrdom of some obscure saint. A black rosary hung from a nail in the wall, and one end of the apartment was covered by the sable drapery of a heavy curtain. The monastery was one where the rules were severe and rigid; it was utterly unlike others where the monks could feast and carouse, and exchange all the gossip of the day. Duval felt unpleasantly reminded of tales which he had heard of the Inquisition in Spain; he turned his back to the picture of horrors, and rather nervously awaited the arrival of the prior.

Jacques had to wait some time; he almost began to think that his message had either not been delivered or that it had been forgotten, when at last the black curtain was moved back, and the prior entered. Duval bowed low as the Roman priest, clad in a black robe, girded with a rope, and holding a crucifix in his hand, with air stately and severe, advanced a few paces towards him. The prior did not ask the visitor to resume the seat from which Jacques had risen on his entrance, but himself remained standing, as if to indicate that the interview should be brief. The hard lines on the

prior's stern pale features gave the impression that his was a nature that had undergone a gradual process of petrifaction.

"What is your business with me?" asked the prior, surveying the stranger with stern but impassive gaze.

"I am very desirous to obtain your kind—gracious permission—to see my young cousin," stammered forth Jacques in a nervous manner.

"Who is your relative?" inquired the prior.

"Louis la Force," was the reply.

The prior's gaze became more keen and penetrating. "You are a Huguenot," he sternly observed, moving one pace backwards, as if to breathe the same air as a heretic breathed involved some moral pollution.

"I am a Huguenot," replied Duval, who never denied his faith; "but I have his Majesty's gracious permission to reside unmolested in Paris."

"You have not mine to intrude into these sacred precincts in order to instil the poison of your heresy into the minds of our youth."

"You will grant me a brief interview with my relative," pleaded Duval; "it may be held in your presence."

"I grant nothing," said the prior with a frown; "and I must request you, monsieur, not to repeat visits which are utterly vain. Your nephew—cousin—has abjured his heretical opinions, he has conformed to our rules, and

received his first communion according to Catholic rites. When old enough, Louis la Force will receive the tonsure also, take his vows, and become one of the community here."

Duval was greatly distressed. "Can this be true!" burst from his lips.

"Do you presume to doubt my word?" said the prior severely. He pointed with an unmistakable gesture towards the door, then added, "Heretics find no place within these walls; never approach them again."

Jacques bowed, and made his retreat into the open air. As he passed through the paved court, the heavy gate was a second time unclosed for a visitor, and a gaily-attired gentleman of the court, who had come in a dashing vehicle, entered the place. The courtier, who has already been introduced to the reader as Baron Perrot, bowed politely to Duval as he passed him; but the Huguenot's mind was so preoccupied that he scarcely noticed the greeting. Duval did not recognize the gentleman whom he had met but once before, and that in the preceding year; but Perrot remembered him.

The prior was still in his parlour when Baron Perrot was announced. He was received far more graciously than Duval had been, and was requested to take a seat. The young courtier was lively and bold; his cheerful voice sounded strangely incongruous in that solemn place.

"I saw Monsieur Duval coming out as I entered," said Perrot, after the first salutations had passed; "doubtless he came to see his young cousin. But you, reverend father, are not likely to let him carry off a lamb from your flock."

"A lamb!" muttered the prior; "say rather a lion's cub. Such an untamable young heretic I had never met with before."

"You have doubtless been trying to draw his fangs and clip his claws," said the gay young baron.

"In obedience to his Majesty's will I have done all that I could to reclaim the youth," was the gloomy prior's reply. "Of course his books were taken away from the first, but he seems to have learned their contents by heart. For every argument brought forward by us the young heretic has an answer."

"But there are some sharp arguments which are not easily answered," observed Perrot, with a significant smile.

"Such have been tried again and again. The young reprobate has had a good many more fasts than the Church prescribes," said the prior grimly, "and solitary confinement besides. Sterner discipline has also been applied, but the wretched boy has borne all with the air of a martyr. Then his health failed, and we were afraid that he might slip out of our hands. Louis's case is hopeless. One cannot wash out the veins in marble

with holy water. I believe that if that boy were cut into a hundred pieces, his last drop of blood would be tainted with the poison of heresy."

"Reverend father, we are now going to take your troublesome patient out of your hands, and try a different kind of treatment," said Baron Perrot. "It appears that Madame la grande Dauphine took a fancy to the handsome boy as well as to his sister some time ago, and thought that he would make a remarkably good-looking page. His father, though a Huguenot, is a man of high rank and stainless honour. His ancestors rendered great services to the State, which our gracious monarch deigns to hold in remembrance. The great king has determined that this youth shall keep the La Force title and estate as a Catholic peer."

"He is an out-and-out heretic," muttered the prior.

"Have you never, reverend father, heard the fable of the sun and the wind contending for the traveller's cloak? The sunshine of a princess's smile will do more to make a spirited youth cast off his heretical rags than all the wind of priestly exhortation, or the pelting hail of castigation. Here is my warrant," continued the young baron, politely handing over a paper to the prior. "You see that I have royal authority for taking La Force with me to the palace. Will it please you to summon the young gentleman at once? for I have a double engagement for this evening, and no time to spare."

With ill grace the prior rang sharply a hand-bell that lay on the table beside him. The summons was answered by a bare-footed monk.

"Bring the boy La Force into my presence at once," said the prior. As the monk retired to obey the command, the head of the monastery remarked with a frown which belied his words, "I am heartily glad to get rid of my heretic charge." He then added, "It is but fair to let you know, Monsieur le Baron, that you will have a slippery subject to deal with. This wretched youth has, in the most daring manner, twice attempted to escape; and the second time, in spite of extraordinary precautions, he almost succeeded."

"We will have silken fetters for the wild bird," laughed Perrot; "they bind faster than those of iron."

A few minutes of silence ensued, and then the black folds of the curtain were again drawn aside, to admit the entrance of the heir of La Force. Perrot was shocked at the change in the appearance of the youth whom he had taken, radiant in health and beauty, from the Huguenot establishment in which the marquis had placed his son. Louis had become much taller, much thinner, and much paler. His fine hazel eyes had lost their brilliance, and, sunken as they were, looked unnaturally large. The captive, however, entered the room with no faltering step, but with an air of resolution, as one prepared to endure. Great was the

youth's surprise when the gaily-dressed courtier rose on his entrance, and going forward to meet him, as if he were an intimate friend, saluted him in French fashion, by embracing him, and kissing him on each cheek. The prior surveyed the greeting with undisguised disgust; but Perrot cared little for the prior, and was rather pleased at this opportunity of teasing the reverend priest.

"*Mon ami!* I am charmed to see you," said the courtier blandly. "I suspect that the air of this holy place has not agreed with your health. I have come to take you to brighter scenes. His Majesty has commanded your attendance at court: you, like myself, will be attached to the retinue of Madame la grande Dauphine."

When an invalid is suddenly taken from the darkness and confinement of a sick-room into the open air, the change is sometimes overpowering. The sunshine dazzles him, the fresh breezes make him at first feel faint and dizzy. Such was the effect of Perrot's unexpected reception and address upon the long-persecuted Huguenot youth. Louis could not speak, but leaned on the back of a chair for support.

"Come," said Perrot good-naturedly, "I have too long intruded on the time of the reverend prior, keeping him from I know not what charitable avocations." There was a touch of satire in the tone of the courtier. "He will

be pleased to send after you what property you may have confided to his parental care. Come" (Perrot laid a kindly hand on the arm of Louis), "my coach waits, and my horses are impatiently pawing the ground.—Monsieur le Prior, reverend father, I have the honour of kissing your feet;" and bowing low, with affected respect, Perrot drew Louis towards the door.

The son of La Force also bowed to his persecutor: the act of courtesy was intuitive, but the youth's lips refused to utter a word. As Louis crossed the paved court, and felt the fresh breeze on his pallid cheek, he fervently hoped that he might not awake and find that he had only been dreaming of freedom.

It was not till Louis was seated beside Perrot in the handsome equipage that the youth found power to speak. "Monsieur," he said, "whither are you going to take me?"

"To the palace of Her Royal Highness Madame la grande Dauphine," was the courtier's reply. "She will possibly grant you the honour of an appointment amongst her pages."

"You are—the princess is probably under a misapprehension," said Louis. "I have not forsaken, and, God helping me, will never forsake the faith of my father."

"Oh, *mon ami*, you are not in the Inquisition, nor in a monastery now. If you do not wear your heresy

ostentatiously, like a satin bow on your sleeve, no one will ask you whether you have a rosary or a hymn-book under your vest. Only one thing I must require of you," said Perrot in a more peremptory manner. "I have heard that you are a slippery sort of fish, always trying to get out of the net; and small blame to you," he added laughing, "if it be made of monastic whip-cord. I think that I myself, in your place, would have risked life to get fairly out. But we can't be watching you night and day," continued Perrot more gravely. "If the fish be let out of the net, it must be into an enclosed piece of water, where he can be fed with dainty crumbs, but not find his way to the open sea. You must pledge the word of a Norman gentleman that you will never attempt to leave Paris without the King's express permission."

"I cannot bind myself never to attempt to see my father and family again," said Louis.

"Then I regret to say that I must bid the coachman turn back, and convey you again to your prison," said the young baron. Seeing that Louis turned paler at the threat, Perrot added with a good-natured smile, "Suppose that we have a compromise—life is made up of compromises. Give me your word of honour that you will not attempt to escape for two or three months—say, to the end of this year: after that," he added gaily, "I would stake my gold snuff-box against a brass nail that

you will never have the slightest wish to escape. Come, give your parole, or—;" Perrot bent towards the open window of the conveyance, as if about to issue a command.

"Stay—I pledge my word, I promise that, till the end of this year, I will make no attempt to quit Paris without the permission of the King," cried Louis.

Little did poor Jacques Duval guess that the gay equipage which dashed on so rapidly, overtaking and passing his slow conveyance, contained the very being for whom he had been vainly searching, the boy over whose apostasy he was mourning.

"I will tell the marquis nothing about this sad visit of mine," said Jacques with a sigh; "such news would break his heart. Far better that my uncle should think of his boy as persecuted or dead than as a renegade from the truth, a shaven monk, a slave of the Church of Rome."

## CHAPTER XIII.

### GINS AND SNARES.

In Bunyan's far-famed allegory, the pilgrim, after his desperate conflict with the demon, his passage through the horrors of the Valley of the Shadow of Death, finds himself in a place full of gins and snares, even more perilous to the soul. Such was the experience of Louis la Force. He had had his wrestle with the powers of darkness, he had had much to endure, yet had bravely held on his way; but in the palace of the dauphine he was exposed to still greater peril to his soul than in the monastic cell. The youth soon recovered health and spirits, and with them his remarkable personal beauty. His mistress, the dauphine, looked on him as a child might regard a goodly toy; she called him her Endymion, and treated him with marked favour. With the ladies of the court Louis was also a favourite. He was richly clad in velvet and lace, sumptuously fed and luxuriously lodged, and, whilst performing his duty as page, was taken to all kinds of

amusements, such as have a fascination for the young. Louis could not avoid them, and, not unnaturally, began keenly to enjoy them.

The poor tempted youth sorely lacked spiritual food; his body was well fed, but his soul was starved. On the first opportunity Louis had tried to procure a Bible, to replace that which the prior had burned. But in luxurious Paris everything seemed to be procurable except the pure Word of God. The page was only stared at in surprise when he asked for a Bible.

There was not a single companion with whom Louis could hold refreshing converse on spiritual things. All at court were either slaves of superstition or slaves of the world, some skilfully combining the service of both. Real, vital religion seemed to be a thing utterly unknown. Louis thought of his cousin Duval. It seemed probable that Jacques had accompanied the marquis to England; Louis knew that to do so had been his relative's declared intention. But on the faint chance of Duval's having remained in France, Louis took advantage of the first respite from attendance in the dauphine's palace to seek his relative in the house which he used to occupy before the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes.

"If I could but see Cousin Jacques and learn from him the address of my family, how happy I should be!" thought Louis, as with rapid steps he passed along the

Boulevards. "I have plighted my word not to try to escape; but I am in no wise bound not to correspond with my father."

The former dwelling-place of Duval was reached, but its aspect was so utterly changed that Louis could scarcely recognize its identity. The mansion which the Duvals had quitted was in process of being converted into a shop. Louis approached a workman who was engaged in putting up a counter, and asked him if he knew anything of a gentleman of the name of Duval, to whom the place used to belong.

"I think I heard that was the name of the last owner," replied the man, pausing, hammer in hand. "I know anyways that he was a rabid Huguenot; and when he sold the premises, doubtless he went off to England or Holland, as the rest of the heretics did."

With a bitter pang of disappointment Louis turned from the place. He now felt utterly cut off from communication with any one whom he loved, any one who could give him advice and help in his struggle against sin.

Perrot, from his attractive qualities, combined with a character frivolous and worldly, was a dangerous companion to Louis, more dangerous far in his gay urbanity than the prior in his sternness had been.

"When Madame la Dauphine's retreat to a convent in the holy season next spring gives you and me respite

from attendance at court, I propose that we make an excursion into Normandy together—of course with his Majesty's permission," said the young courtier, as he and Louis, in an antechamber, were awaiting the princess's coming out for a drive. "We will go to your fine old château, and have a famous hunt in the forest."

"I should not like to see the place, so much changed as it must be," said Louis.

"It is not in the least changed," cried Perrot. "His Majesty gave strict command that everything should be kept up as in the days of your father—not a tenant discharged, not a tree cut down. Fontainebleu told me this himself, and with no little mortification. He had expected to have permanent possession of the estate, with a right to do what he pleased, and finds that he is merely holding the fine old property in trust, until your coming of age."

"But the King will never suffer the estate to be in Huguenot hands," observed Louis.

"No, dear heretic, *cela va sans dire;* but I have too much confidence in your common sense to believe that at the age of one-and-twenty you will be a Huguenot still. You will, long ere that time, be as good a Catholic as—as I am." Perrot laughed as he finished the sentence, for he was well known to have little regard for any kind of religion.

"Were I so base as to wear such a mask, I should

bring shame and grief on my father!" cried the heir of La Force.

"Depend upon it, your father would be glad to see his son enjoying the good things which he himself recklessly flung away."

"You do not know my father!" exclaimed Louis. "He would rather see his son a martyr than an apostate!"

The French courtier shrugged his shoulders and smiled: his was the bland, compassionate smile of one who from the height of his worldly wisdom looks down with pity on the weak scruples of those whom he deems less wise.

It may to some be a matter of surprise that Louis, though often in gay assemblies, never should meet Madame Duval and Felicie, whose lives were given to worldly pleasures. But those who know what rigid barriers divided different circles of society in those days of most oppressive etiquette will hardly feel surprise. The planets do not cross each other's orbits; there is an impassable space between those nearest to the sun and such as are more remote. Louis was far nearer society's sun, as King Louis was recognized to be, than the family of his father's half-sister, who had married below her rank.

The mental struggles of young La Force may be shown by the following extracts from a journal which he kept, a journal intended for no eye but his own.

Louis, in the absence of a Christian companion, felt that to note down his own trials, temptations, and falls might be a help to his soul:—

"*December 1.*—I am utterly disgusted with my own frivolity and weakness. I had formed so many good resolutions; but which of them have I kept? *Regular prayer, at morning, noonday, and night,* this was one broken resolution! I do, indeed, usually pray in the morn, when I open my eyes to the light; the world then seems more still—I can hold communion with God. It is then that I remember my dear parents and sweet Adéle. Oh, shall I ever see them again! The thought of them, the assurance that they are praying for me, braces my soul, as the pure air braces my spirits. But soon the racket and bustle of the day drives from me all good thoughts. I often do not remember the noonday prayer at all; or, if I remember it, have no opportunity for praying. The night is worst of all. I come home so tired, or so excited, from amusements carried on late, that either my mind is full of what I have seen, or I fall asleep on my knees whilst making an attempt to pray.

"*December 5.*—I think that at the monastery the prior was like a rider who uses whip and spur to make his horse leap over a precipice. The horse sees the danger, starts, rears, backs, and refuses the leap. But the creature may be led gently down a winding road,

till he come to the very spot which his rider in vain tried to force him to reach. Is it not thus with me? I fear that I am on a downward course, and I actually find it pleasant! I know that the atmosphere which I breathe is choking the life out of my religion; that I am not so earnest, so devoted, as I once thought myself to be. Oh, my God, have mercy upon me!

"*December 7.*—I was quite angry to-day because the tailor had made a mistake in slashing my sleeves, and my doublet was a misfit! I am afraid that I am vain. It was a real pleasure to beat Perrot at rapier-practice, and to hear what the ladies said about it. My prayers so lifeless and cold!

"*December 10.*—I was to-day actually intoxicated with pride and pleasure by a gracious word from the King himself. The grand monarch condescended to notice the page, and made me at once an object of envy. The King said: 'The boy looks like a true La Force. He will lead my troops on the battle-field one day, and show himself a true descendant of the *preux chevalier* who died at Ivri.' My face flushed, my heart beat fast; I felt at the moment that the grandest object in life was fame—the greatest reward, a monarch's favour! Oh, my Lord, my heavenly King, what is all earthly fame and honour and praise compared to Thy '*Well done!*' Shall I forget that the earthly King has banished my father, has tried to crush my religion?—shall I forget

that he is stained with the blood of martyrs? But it is so hard not to bow down to a golden idol, when it is worshipped by all the rest of the world.

"*December 12.*—I have been thinking of that parable in the Pilgrim book which our mother used to read to us in the evening—the parable of the fire which continued burning though so much water was poured upon it to quench it and put it out. There was One behind the wall secretly pouring oil to keep the flame alive. Sometimes I think that One is near me now; that the Lord is really helping with His Spirit His poor tempted, backsliding child. I certainly *wish* to be His—body and soul—His now and for ever!

"*December 13.*—Have found some aid from repeating psalms. It is well that I was taught to learn by heart a good deal from the Scriptures. If I could but once hear my father's voice, and feel his dear hand on my head as when he used to give me his blessing at night in the happy, holy days of my childhood, I think that I should press on with fresh vigour in the race set before me; that I should not care for the worldly vanities which he despised. Shall I ever look on his face again? I often meditate on the possibility of flying to England, when the ending of the year shall free me from my parole. But the more I think over the matter, the more impossible escape seems to be. In the dress which I wear I should be at once recognized as belonging to

the court; I should be arrested, and sent back to my hated cell. How to change this dress I know not. Strangely enough, the clothes which I wore on coming to Paris have disappeared, and I have no means of procuring more. I once thought of selling my silver-hilted dagger and buttons to procure the means of flight; but these things are not actually mine, they belong to my mistress, the dauphine. My every want is supplied, except the want of money.

"And even if I should succeed in reaching England,—if, trampling on impossibilities, I should find myself in the land of the free,—how should I accomplish my great object, that of rejoining my family? I have not the smallest clew to guide me to the residence of my father. Oh, my vain hopes!—my vain search for a door of escape from this place of sin and temptation! I can but cast myself on the mercy of Him who is able to save!

"*December 15.*—My foot has well-nigh slipped. I happened to mention about an hour ago to Perrot that mine is an empty purse (we are naturally intimate from being so much together), when he laughingly said, 'I will show you the way to fill it. I'll lend you a couple of louis-d'ors, and you shall return them to me when you have made a hundred at the card-table.' Then Perrot mentioned such and such a one who had had 'a run of luck,' and laughing, expressed his con-

viction that I should carry all before me. He threw the gold pieces clinking down on the table; and I actually laid my hand upon them, and tried to persuade myself for a moment that my reason for wishing for money would justify the means I might take to acquire it. I was afraid, too—coward that I am!—that Perrot would ridicule scruples on my part, and I do so hate to be laughed at. Then it almost seemed as if I heard a voice of warning sounding in my ears, 'Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.' I gave back the two pieces, and said—I blush to remember what an effort it cost me to do so—'My father forbade all gambling; he never himself touched a card.' To my surprise, instead of laughing, Perrot remarked, as he pocketed the gold, 'If *my* father had been as sensible as yours, I should have inherited many a broad acre which he lost at the gaming-table before I was born.'

"*December 30.*—Madame la Dauphine is spending the Christmas season at the country seat of the Duc de Nismes. Perrot and I are left behind, so we have the dangerous privilege of having nothing to do but to amuse ourselves as we please. Perrot has been urging me to go with him to-morrow to the reception of a certain Madame la Rouge, who was once an actress, married a rich man, and is now famed—I might use a harder word—I mean that all the world talks about her. Perrot says that in the *beau monde* it is the

fashion to go to this woman's receptions, and that he is able to introduce me. There is to be wonderful singing, and the private acting of a play which has been condemned as unfit for the stage. Here seems to be a point where I ought to make a stand against the current which is drifting me along. It is better to offend Perrot than to go to a place where my father would be ashamed to see his son. I will *not* accompany Perrot to the mansion of Madame la Rouge. I will spend the last day of this eventful year alone with my God."

This was the last entry which Louis la Force was ever to make in that journal.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### A MEETING.

Madame Duval has at length attained her object. Felicie is engaged to the Vicomte Tallin, the presumptive heir of a dukedom. What matters it that he is a gambler, and bears by no means a character unstained? Such a marriage opens a prospect to Belinde's frivolous daughter of at length reaching the very pinnacle of her ambition, occupying a *tabouret* in the presence of royalty itself! Mother and daughter are alike intoxicated by such worldly advancement, and an anxious father expostulates and counsels in vain. Felicie is Duval's only child, and the Huguenot is reported to be rich; his wife having contrived to give a general impression that he is stingy, and that his expenditure is greatly below his means, though the contrary is the actual fact. Madame Duval's extravagance is draining her husband's purse; but this troubles her little—she thinks money well spent if it bring her the honour of being mother-in-law to a peer. The marriage is to take

place in January, and to be celebrated with great pomp and expense. Poor honest Jacques is burdened with sorrow and care, but he is a cipher in his own house.

"*Mon amie*, you and our child are not going to leave me again this evening, the last in the year!" said Duval to Belinde, as she sat, in embroidered dressing-gown, sipping her coffee, previous to putting on her more sumptuous evening attire.

"I thought you knew that we were engaged to sup at Madame Froissy's; but you have no memory," said the lady pettishly.

"But you will come home early, *mon amie;* I will sit up—"

"Oh! pray do not sit up for us, or you may have to wait till daylight. Madame and her party are all to go together to a charming reception at the house of Madame la Rouge."

Jacques was startled at the name, and a shadow of displeasure crossed his mild face. "I cannot allow you to take our daughter to that house," he said, with unusual decision. It was an ineffectual effort to catch up a rein which Duval had long ago suffered to drop from his hand.

"Monsieur le Vicomte Tallin is going, and we are going," said Belinde, with a slight toss of her head.

"Oh, would that I had accompanied my uncle to

England!" exclaimed Jacques, in the bitterness of his soul.

"I wish that you had," was the tart reply, as Belinde added more cream to her coffee. "You do nothing but cross and worry us here; I wish that you would go to the foggy island now."

"O Belinde! and desert you and my daughter!" cried the poor husband, with a choking voice. "What would become of you if I left you?"

"Felicie will have her home in the halls of a peer of France, and my daughter's residence will be mine," said the woman of the world. Madame Duval rose from her seat with an impatient movement, which upset her coffee over her dress.

Jacques did not wait to hear his wife's exclamations of annoyance; he left the room, he left the house—its atmosphere seemed to choke him. Duval went forth into the streets, which were crowded with gay loungers and those busy in making purchases for the morrow's *fête* of the New Year. The shops of Paris were more than usually gay, glittering with all kinds of jewellery, real and false, boxes of confectionery, toys, dolls dressed in every style that could be imagined. There was everything to attract the eye and charm the taste; but Jacques, absorbed in sad thought, saw little of the brilliance of the world's Vanity Fair. He was a burdened pilgrim, weighed down more by the sins of others

than by his own. His great fault had been weakness of character—a fault most severely punished and repented of most sincerely.

"It is too early to go to Casseau's; the lamps are not yet lighted," said Jacques to himself. "I shall just walk about to keep myself warm; but not in all this racket and whirl, this gaiety in which I have no part." Duval turned down into a street in which there were no shops, and fewer passengers, though it was by no means empty of them. He had no aim but to while away the tedious time, and no companion but bitter thoughts and regrets.

Presently the comparative quiet of the street was invaded by a religious procession. A company of priests, dressed in their robes, bearing crosses, and swinging censers of incense, was passing along, the monks carrying aloft the Host, on their way to administer the last rites of the Church of Rome to a dying nobleman of distinction. At the sound of the bell, which was rung at the head of the procession, all the passengers in the street, except one, lifted their hats and dropped on their knees to do homage to what their superstition regarded as Divinity shrouded in a wafer. Duval alone stood upright. A crowd of *gamins* and roughs, who were following the procession, and who were glad of a safe opportunity of insulting one of the upper class, shouted out, "Hat off! down on your knees!"

But Duval did not obey. His was not a strong character, but his weakness was not want of personal courage. Jacques was too conscientious a Protestant to be frightened into paying homage to a wafer because it had passed through the hands of a priest.

"He's a Huguenot—a heretic! down with him—kick him!" shouted the mob which had followed the procession. The spark of hatred toward the *aristocrates*, who were considered oppressors, that spark which at the Revolution blazed up into a volcano, was smouldering in the breasts of the poor of Paris. The strong hand of despotism kept it down; but that hand would not be stretched out to protect a Huguenot. A Protestant might be insulted, perhaps even murdered, without any one being in danger of being sent to the dreaded Bastille. There was a savage rush made at Duval, his hat was rudely knocked off his head, and he was violently struck to the ground; whilst the procession moved on, scarcely a priest glancing back to see what was passing, not one interfering to save a heretic from brutal treatment at the hands of the mob.

Duval managed to struggle to his feet, gasping, bruised, and excited. He would have been instantly knocked down again, but for the sudden interposition of a youth who had happened to turn down into the street from another which crossed it at right angles.

"What is this? Back, back, ruffians! What! all on one unarmed man?" exclaimed an indignant voice.

The crowd divided at once to make passage for a stranger who wore the well-known livery and badge of the dauphin, the heir to the crown. He would have been a bold man indeed who should not, in those days, have paid respect to an officer of the royal household. The mob left Duval alone with his unexpected protector, and ran to catch up the procession again.

"Louis la Force!"—"Cousin Jacques!" were the exclamations exchanged between the two who, with extreme surprise, recognized each other at the same moment. They embraced with affection, then each drew back, surveying his newly-found relative with a look of painful suspicion.

"You in Paris, cousin! Then you have conformed—"

"No, I am a Huguenot still," cried Jacques. "But you are—"

"*Faithful till death* is our motto," was the page's reply.

"But is it possible that—"

"Oh, tell me of my family!" exclaimed Louis, with an impatience which brooked no delay. "My father—mother—Adéle—"

"All safe and well in England," was the reply. "There is a budget of their letters awaiting you in my house; but I knew not where to find you. I was

told that you had recanted, and were going to be a monk."

"A foul lie!" exclaimed Louis fiercely.

Jacques had been so much startled by the unexpected appearance of his lost cousin, that it was not till the first words had been exchanged that he had had time to think of his own state. His large wig, soiled and trampled on, lay on the ground near his crushed hat; and the sleeve of his coat was torn, while his face was dust-stained and bruised. Duval was too much of a Frenchman to be indifferent to his own personal appearance; he stooped, and picking up his wig, surveyed it with a pathetic sadness which brought a smile to the lips of the page.

"I doubt whether even Casseau will quite set this right," said Duval, mentioning the name of a hairdresser well known in the highest circles of fashion. "I will go to his shop. I was going there, but at this hour it will be quite full; every Parisian is preparing to appear at some evening entertainment."

"Never mind the *perruquier!*" exclaimed Louis. "Let us go to your home at once; I long for my letters —I long to hear everything that you can tell me about my father."

Jacques replaced his damaged wig and hat on his head after carefully shaking the dust from each: he was by no means in such a hurry as was the younger La

Force. Duval led his cousin through the less frequented streets by a very circuitous route to his own house: he did not wish to reach it till his wife and Felicie should have left it to keep their evening engagement. But the way did not seem long, for each of the cousins had so much to tell and so much to hear.

"My father—the Marquis la Force—*he* stoop to be a teacher in a girls' school!—he, with his intellect, his talents, his rank!" exclaimed Louis, with a thrill of pain, as he contrasted his parent's present position with that which he had held in his fair ancestral home. "How does my father bear the degradation?"

"He accounts it no degradation," replied Jacques. "In his last letter my noble kinsman wrote that if he could but have good tidings of his son, he would be contented, thankful, and happy."

"And my mother?"

"The tone of her letters is cheerful; but she is too busy to write much. From what Adéle tells us, it appears that the marquise helps to supply the family purse by her needle."

"Noble woman!" exclaimed Louis. "And Adéle, my charming sister, how does she bear the change?"

"She feels it bitterly," replied Jacques. "It is not so much poverty that distresses her, as the dulness and sameness of the life which she leads, the utter absence

of anything like the little diversions so dear to a child of *belle France*."

"Ah, my poor sister! She so delighted in her free, bright life at the château—her horse and her pets, her flowers, her glorious woods, her lyre, and her youthful companions."

"Adéle seems now to have no companions," said Jacques, "at least none that she cares to consort with. Your sister cannot endure any one who addresses her as 'Miss Force,' and forgets that she is the daughter of a Norman noble."

"Poor Adéle! The absence of congenial companions is no small trial," observed Louis; "at least *I* have sorely felt it. I should have found it such a help to have had one, only *one*, to have sympathized with me in my troubles and counselled me in my temptations."

"Would you like me to introduce you to Christian friends?" asked Duval, intuitively lowering his voice, though Louis was the only listener near.

"Are there any such in Paris?" asked young La Force. "Until I met you to-day, I thought that I was the only Huguenot in this city."

"Elijah knew not of the seven thousand who had never bowed the knee to Baal," was his cousin's reply. "The Lord has His Huguenot flock, a very small one indeed, in this city, and a faithful shepherd who watches over their spiritual state, although"—Jacques glanced

anxiously behind him to see that no one was stealing on him in the deepening twilight ere he added—"although you know that he must do so at the risk of his life."

"His name?" asked Louis, with interest.

"Gerard Martine," was the scarcely audible reply.

The name was familiar to the Huguenot youth as that of a gifted preacher, the son of a martyr.

## CHAPTER XV.

### A MEMORABLE NIGHT.

Louis, at the house of Duval, read his home-letters with the eagerness with which a man parched with thirst drains the life-giving cup. When for the third time he had read his father's, he looked up with a smile. "Now I am ready for anything!" said the son of La Force.

"You will wish to write answers to your family," remarked Duval.

"Yes; at once." Louis snatched up a quill which lay on the table at which he was seated.

"Not more than two lines now," said Duval. "There is an opportunity of sending at daybreak; but if you desire to be present at the secret meeting of our persecuted brethren, we must be off at once. There will be another post to England in a few days."

"I could not wait," exclaimed Louis, whose eager hand was already engaged in rapid writing.

"I at least must keep my appointment," said Jacques Duval, rising from his seat.

Louis reluctantly closed his short epistle; he resolved, as he said with a smile, to "make amends for its brevity by writing volumes by the next post. I must have my father's latest address, for I see that he is no longer under Mr. Page's inhospitable roof." The youth drew out the little ivory tablet which he carried on his person.

While Louis was writing down the address, Duval sealed the letter which was to carry such delight into a home beyond the Channel, and promised to send the despatch in the morning.

"Now we must go; we are late," observed Jacques.

Louis's heart was bounding with happiness, and his brain was full of projects for rejoining his father. The youth walked silently beside his cousin; and Jacques, on his part, was little disposed for conversation. To be present at a Huguenot religious service was always attended with peril, and Jacques was not one to love danger for danger's sake.

It was Louis who broke the silence, "Why, we are going towards one of the gayest streets of Paris! Whither are you taking me?"

"To Casseau, the *perruquier*," was the reply.

Louis was surprised, almost indignant, at what he deemed the frivolity of a middle-aged man. "Oh! you cannot surely spare these precious moments to—." Courtesy forbade the completion of the sentence.

Jacques smiled, but his smile could not be seen in the darkness, for the street through which they were passing was only illuminated here and there by an oil-lamp suspended from a rope which extended across the narrow way.

"I go to the *perruquier* from regard to something beyond the care of my wig," said Jacques, "though that gives me a fair excuse. Casseau is a mainstay of our cause."

"But is it possible that a Huguenot is suffered to pursue his trade here in Paris, at least if his principles are known?"

"His principles are suspected, but winked at," replied Duval, still speaking in a low, confidential tone. "Our friend's skill makes him indispensable to those connected with the court, even to Madame de Maintenon, that queen without the name. No one can make a wig like Casseau, so his faith is not inquired into too curiously."

"But Casseau's shop, in a gay thoroughfare, is one of the last places in which a secret meeting could possibly be held."

"I did not say that it was held in the shop," replied Jacques, smiling again. "Casseau has a cellar, which is used for something besides holding wine or wood. The back entrance is in a lane so narrow that it will hardly admit the cart which holds the fagots. If I were to enter by that low lane, I should cause suspicion. I go

through the shop; but I and Casseau are the only ones who do so. But before we enter yon lighted street, I had better give you our watchword—we take it from the name of a martyr of old; but as it happens to be that of a late assistant in the shop, even if overheard it would hardly awake suspicion. If you would make yourself known as a Huguenot brother, say in an indifferent tone, as if inquiring for a servant, "Where is Farel?" If the reply be, "*With his Master*," you recognize in the speaker a brother in the faith. But now let us talk on indifferent subjects; we are in *Rue Royale*."

There was a colour of romance in this night expedition, which had a fascination for the son of La Force: the shade of danger deepened the effect. Following the hint of Duval, Louis chatted as merrily as if no object were in view but the repair of his cousin's trampled wig. Casseau's fashionable shop was brilliantly lighted, but at that late hour was almost empty. Only one customer was under the *perruquier's* hands, and that one was in an impatient, angry mood.

"I say, make haste! I have an engagement: the theatricals will have begun, and— Ah! Monsieur Duval, I kiss your hands. You are even later than myself." And Jacques, little to his gratification, had to exchange a ceremonious greeting with the Vicomte Tallin.

"I suppose," said the latter, "that you, like myself,

are bound to the reception of Madame la Rouge.—Make haste!" The last words were addressed to Casseau, who stood behind, girt with apron, and comb in his hand. "Pray, who is your young companion?" inquired the Vicomte of Duval, curiously surveying Louis la Force.

"My young cousin," was Jacques' brief reply. In his heart he was repeating Tallin's "Make haste," for he was impatient to have the place clear from the Vicomte's unwelcome presence.

Casseau did make what haste he could; but his customer was hard to be pleased. The false curls would not fall in the most becoming manner: Tallin again and again consulted the mirror.

"Possibly you too are in haste, Monsieur Duval," said the Vicomte rising at last; "I see that you require Casseau's skilful touch even more than I did. I have the honour to bid you adieu." And with the low formal bow which etiquette required, Tallin at length quitted the shop, leaving behind him the sickly odour of musk.

Casseau, as he laid down the comb, looked inquiringly, suspiciously, at the page of Madame la Dauphine.

"Give him the word," whispered Jacques.

"Where is Farel?" asked Louis.

"With his Master—in Heaven," was the low reply. "I see, monsieur, that you are one of us.—Gentlemen, will you follow me? I have something worthy your notice," continued Casseau in a louder tone, leading the

way into an inner show-room. In this was a collection of various wigs, some kept under glass, some fitted on wax models of heads. It need hardly be said that no one now paused to examine these specimens of the *perruquier's* art.

Casseau, after first glancing round, drew a curtain which concealed a door. Opening this door, he led his companions into a passage which was very dimly lighted, after carefully closing the door behind him, when he and the other two had passed through. Proceeding along the passage, the guide opened another door to the left, and then, followed by Jacques and Louis, groped his way down a steep dark staircase till he reached a cellar. Never could Louis forget the impression left on his mind when he entered that strange underground place of worship.

There was but a small congregation, and that apparently of the lower class of artisans, men and women in almost equal proportion. There was the baker, just as he had left his oven, with his sleeves rolled up; the workman in his coarse fustian;—sons of toil, with their hard-working wives. They were seated on fagots, with fagots around. The very table on which were the elements for celebrating the Holy Supper was of the same material, half hidden under a pure white cloth. Most of the cellar was in shadow, for a single lamp very ineffectually lighted the place. Louis looked to see

how the people had entered, and how they could quit their subterranean chapel. He noticed a ladder at the farther end, but it was too dark for him to see the trap-door above it, which could be fastened on the inside. This little door opened on the back lane by which the Huguenots stole to the place of meeting.

Duval's entrance caused no surprise, for he was well known to all present; but that of the handsome page in the royal livery occasioned not only surprise but alarm. Several men sprang to their feet, and one exclaimed, "We are betrayed!"

"Nay; my cousin knows Farel, and Farel's Master," cried Duval. "He is the son of the exiled Marquis la Force."

"Then he is indeed our brother," cried one who emerged from a dark part of the cellar, and on whose emaciated but noble features the lamp now shed its full light. Louis recognized Gerard Martine, and was at once pressed in his loving embrace. Then hard horny hands were eagerly extended from every side, and were successively grasped by Louis la Force. Distinction of rank seemed forgotten in that cellar-church; there was the family tie, love to the brethren, to which a young Indian convert gave the beautiful name of *glory-love*.

The interest felt by Louis in that little assembly of "the true and the tried" culminated in the shepherd who was feeding a persecuted flock. Every time that Gerard

Martine showed forth the Lord's death according to the simple rites of a pure church, he knew that he did so at the peril of his life. The fagots around him were remembrancers of the fate which might be before him. Louis looked with loving reverence on the pale, worn man, whose countenance told of so much suffering, and yet of so much peace. And when Gerard began his exhortation, the youth hung on the words of counsel and comfort, as if a St. Paul, fresh from the torment of the scourge, had stood before him. When the holy service proceeded, it seemed to Louis that, as at Pentecost, the Spirit of life and love was poured down on the children of God. "It is good to be here," was the young Huguenot's silent thought.

The service, which every one present felt might be his last upon earth, lasted till nearly midnight. When all was over, when each individual had received the pasteur's fervent blessing, the little assembly broke up. The trap-door was unfastened by a man standing on the ladder, and presently the stars and dark-blue sky were visible through what looked like a square hole, and the cold wintry air rushed in. While the poorer Huguenots were passing one by one through this aperture, which was barely large enough to admit the exit of the larger men, Casseau and the cousins mounted the staircase and soon reached the empty show-room. The shop was almost as dark now as the cellar, for a trusty servant

had extinguished all the lights but one. Not a word was spoken by any of the three Huguenots; it was no small relief to Casseau when the two gentlemen had silently quitted his shop without attracting notice, for the street was now deserted.

Louis and his cousin parted, as their way lay in opposite directions. The page did not regret being alone, for he needed solitude in order fully to realize the deep, inexpressible happiness which was filling his breast. It was as if Louis had been in the immediate presence of his Master; had asked from Him pardon, grace, and strength; and had received the gracious reply, "Go in peace; thy sins are forgiven thee." Louis had found his lost earthly parent; and he had found the Heavenly Father from whom he had been in danger of wandering. The pilgrim was clad in the best robe, the shining ring was upon his hand, he was wearing the sandals of peace, ready to dare anything, endure anything for the Lord whom he loved. Now and then Louis passed some gaily-lighted mansion, from which sounds of music and mirth told of revels held to welcome in the New Year. But with what changed emotions did Louis now regard the pomps and vanities of the world! He felt that he had been amused and well-nigh led astray by following mere bubbles floating on a river which was tainted with pollution and tinted with blood.

"I must escape from these dangerous environments,

and rejoin my father on the first opportunity that I can find," thought Louis, as he sped along, with the bright stars sparkling overhead. "What intense happiness it will be to see him again, to look him in the face, and to be able to tell him that I have been kept from doing anything that would have made him blush for his son! I will welcome poverty shared with my family. I will shrink from no kind of work: the meanest labour would be glorified by the thought that it is done for God. My whole being is flooded with light and joy. Bless the Lord, O my soul!"

On entering the dauphin's palace, Louis was met by Perrot, who looked jaded and out of spirits.

"It was a dull affair after all," said Perrot, whose vanity had received and whose pride resented some slight at the house of Madame la Rouge. "But, La Force, where have you been roaming? You look as if you had been in Elysium. Have you discovered some way of enjoying yourself on the sly?"

Louis's only answer was a bright smile, as he mounted the gilded staircase to seek his own apartment.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### A SECRET.

Louis's first employment, after he had ended his morning devotions, was to write a batch of letters to England. A delightful occupation he found it, and so absorbing that thrice the clock chimed, and sheet after sheet was covered with close manuscript, before the page laid down his pen. To communicate again with his family, to pour out his heart on paper, to imagine the interest with which his epistles would be read, was a luxurious feast to one long debarred from all intercourse with his relatives. Louis folded a large sheet of paper over his enclosures—envelopes at that time being unknown—carefully sealed and directed the packet, and then arose from his seat.

"I cannot send this from the palace," he said to himself. "Such a packet would awake suspicion, and probably never reach England at all. It will be far safer to forward my despatches through my good cousin Duval. He said that there would soon be another

opportunity. I will just snatch a hasty breakfast, and then be off to him at once."

Soon afterwards Louis placed his tasselled velvet cap over his flowing locks, and sallied forth with his packet safe in his bosom. With the New Year had come freedom from parole. La Force trod lightly, as if on air, so full of joy was his heart. Duval's house was reached; Louis knocked at the door of his relative's mansion, and when it was opened by a gaudily-dressed menial, he was disappointed on hearing that Monsieur Duval had gone out.

"But the ladies are within, monsieur," said the obsequious servant. He was but one of several who were in attendance, for Madame Duval affected state.

"I certainly ought to see my relatives," thought Louis, as he followed his conductor, after giving his own name.

Louis was soon in the presence of madame and her daughter, who, in the glories of brocade, lace, and jewels, sat ready to receive the throng of visitors whom they had expected to pay their compliments on the festival of the New Year.

The entrance of the long-lost Louis occasioned great surprise, and the court-costume which he wore caused not a little pleasure. To have a relative in Madame la grande Dauphine's household seemed to these quality-hunters a link with royalty itself. Louis was over-

whelmed with compliments at which he knew not whether to blush or to laugh. He had grown so tall, so handsome, so *distingué*, any one could see at a glance that he lived in a court! Then came eager questions, not always easily answered. Louis longed for the arrival of other visitors, to draw attention from himself.

"We must have you at our little *masque* next week!" cried Felicie: "it is not exactly a *masque*, but something more original and delightful. Six gentlemen are to come in disguised as country boors; we have their coarse blouses and wooden shoes all ready. The Vicomte Tallin is to object to their intrusion; and just as he is about to turn them out, off go the blouses and *sabots*, the supposed peasants suddenly blaze forth in silk and jewels as Eastern princes, single out partners, and have a dance! Is it not a charming idea? It was suggested by Madame la Rouge."

Louis, whose mind was full of weightier matters, could scarcely give the attention which courtesy demanded to his cousin's frivolous talk, but took advantage of the first pause to inquire where he could find his cousin Duval.

The look of pleasure and interest which had been on the ladies' faces turned to one of cold indifference; and madame spoke of one whom she was bound to honour in a careless tone—a tone almost of contempt—which roused her hearer's indignation.

"Oh! no one knows where he has gone; one never can tell what fancy monsieur may take into his head. Jacques has nothing in common with us. He is sometimes away all the day, and sups at Les Trois Biseaux instead of doing the honours here to the guests whom I invite." Madame took for granted that the dauphine's page was a pervert like herself, or she would not have sneeringly added, "Monsieur cares for nothing but hunting out old beggars, or searching for Huguenot fools."

Louis rose, with flushed cheek and sparkling eyes. "Pray remember, madame," he said, "that *I* am to be counted amongst these Huguenot fools!" and with cold, stiff salutations, the page hastened out of the room, meeting several visitors on the staircase.

"Where and how can I have a private interview with Cousin Jacques?" thought Louis la Force. "He is evidently no master in his own house. Madame mentioned Les Trois Biseaux. I will go there this evening on the chance of meeting my good, kind cousin."

Louis did not forget his intention. When in the *salons* of the numerous restaurants of Paris shining lamps threw their light on gilded labels, and tempting dishes, and savoury scents from soups and stews tantalized hungry *gamins*, lingering around doors that they might not enter, Louis crossed the threshold of one

which displayed in gold letters the name of Les Trois Biseaux. Groups of men of the upper class were seated at marble tables, examining the *cartes* beside them, busily discussing the viands, or giving orders to the *garçons* who hurried from place to place, bringing dishes and uncorking bottles of wine. Louis gave an inquiring glance around, but nowhere did the short portly form of Duval meet his eye. The page was going to retreat, when Perrot called from his place at a table at the end of the room,—"You here, La Force! This is an unexpected *rencontre*. Come; you arrive just in time to save me from taking a solitary meal."

Louis could not in courtesy avoid going and taking a seat beside the courtier, though he had no wish to converse with him then.

"Let me order your supper; this *pâté de foie gras* is perfection," said Perrot, who was a connoisseur in what regarded the table.

"Excuse me, I have supped," replied Louis.

"Then you shall talk whilst I eat. I want you to tell me where you spent such a lively time last night. I promise you to be a discreet father-confessor; and you see that we need not fear eaves-dropping." Perrot glanced as he spoke at the occupants of the next table, who were English, and who showed by their blundering attempts to give orders to the *garçon* that they were almost entirely ignorant of French. "I

am really curious to know where you went," continued Perrot.

"Suppose that I do not choose to confess," said Louis.

"Come, come, I don't suppose that you were up to much mischief. Perhaps you visited one of the gambling *salons*, and came off with a heavy purse."

"No use guessing," said Louis.

"Now I'll barter a secret of my own for yours. I can tell you something worth hearing."

"I want to hear no man's secrets, so you may lock up yours," said the page.

But the lively Perrot was not one who could shut up a secret; "the cat symbolic" would always with him be peeping out of the bag. "I'll be generous and not barter," said he, drawing his chair a little closer to that on which Louis was seated. "We shall have a sensation in Paris to-morrow. Your old friend the prior, who is always on the *qui-vive* to smell out heretical rats, has discovered a nest of them in a cellar, and the weasels will be at them to-night."

"What do you mean?" cried Louis.

"What I mean to say is, that a heretic priest, a *pasteur* they call him, is lurking in some hole in Paris, and that the prior is on his scent. We shall again have the entertainment of having a Huguenot hanged, burned, —or—maybe broken on the wheel."

"You forget, sir, that you speak to a Huguenot!"

exclaimed Louis, starting from his seat; and without another word, the page strode rapidly out of the restaurant's *salon.*

"What a temper the young cock is in!" muttered Perrot; "it is rather too early for him to show his spurs. If this *pâté* were not so uncommonly good, I'd be after him, and make him apologize for his rudeness."

## CHAPTER XVII.

### A RACE FOR LIFE.

It was well that Perrot was too well engaged to follow Louis, though he would hardly have overtaken one who was hurrying on at the utmost speed compatible with not actually running. Louis dared not obey the impulse to rush on as if racing, lest he should attract attention. At this *fête* of the New Year the streets were filled with loungers and pleasure-seekers; and others there were, besides, engaged on a sterner quest. The young Huguenot caught sight of a party of *gendarmes* going in the direction of Casseau's shop; he even distinguished the black frock of a monk amongst them. Louis knew the locality well, so dashed down a side street to take a short cut. There, indeed, he took to running—nearly knocked over a child, and narrowly escaped being run over himself. It was a race for life; for well the Huguenot knew that Gerard Martine, if seized, must expect no mercy.

Casseau's lighted shop is reached. Gentlemen are

there, having the last touches given to their flowing wigs before going to theatre or assembly. Casseau himself is busy with a customer's hair. There is no time for delay; Louis merely gives the *perruquier* one warning look, and passes into the show-room, which is happily empty. Louis, pushing back the curtain, goes straight to the door in the passage, by which, on the previous night, he had reached the narrow stair leading down to the cellar. The second door is shut—he cannot open it; it has evidently been fastened on the inside by some one in hiding below. Louis knocks impatiently—no reply; knocks again and more loudly, but there is still no answer. The page is almost in despair; then remembrance of the watchword flashes across his mind. "Where is Farel?" he cries out, careless now whether he be overheard by strangers or not. The door on the staircase so instantly opens that it is evident the knocking must have brought a silent listener to the top of the stairs. Louis rather feels than sees that it is Gerard Martine who stands before him.

"You must fly—the bloodhounds are upon you!" gasps forth the breathless youth as he enters. "Let me bolt the door again; if the enemy have to force it open, that will cause a little delay."

The door is bolted, and the two Huguenots noiselessly and rapidly make their way down the steep, narrow stair. Gerard is the less excited of the two.

The cellar, as before, is lighted by a single lamp. Louis glances anxiously at the rope-ladder at the end, by which he knows that the Huguenots are wont to ascend to the trap-door, which is the only means of exit to those who dare not pass through the shop.

"Quick!—up the ladder and away!" cries Louis. "You have not a moment to lose—I hear a noise above!"

"You first, my generous friend."

"No, no; never mind me," cries the youth, across whose mind not a thought of possible risk to himself has passed before. "I am a favourite at court; they will not harm me."

Loud voices are indeed now heard through the closed door, telling that the *gendarmes* are already in the shop. The movements of Martine are quickened. He thrusts his Bible into his vest, takes out the key of the trap-door, and then, as rapidly as he can, ascends the rope-ladder. The officers are now thundering at the door above the staircase.

"Throw down the key!" cries Louis.

Martine does so. He is now in the open air, and only stops a second to utter one word of fervent gratitude to his young preserver, with another urging him to follow quickly.

Louis springs up the ladder, pulls down the trap-door, and with fingers trembling with excitement locks it

above his head. The youth has doubted for a moment whether he should not escape by the trap-door himself; but that must involve his leaving it open, and he thinks it better to give Martine a chance of distancing his pursuers by opposing a barrier to their following him quickly. Every moment is precious. The pursuers are evidently battering open the door in the passage. Louis springs down the ladder, then taking out and opening a penknife which he has with him, he exerts all his energy to cut the ropes asunder. Blows and kicks are being rained on the door above, accompanied by loud oaths and curses. Soon a tremendous crash tells that the door has given way—it has fallen on the stair, for a few minutes obstructing the passage of the pursuers.

The rope of the ladder is thick and strong, it does not readily yield to the knife, though Louis is using all his strength. The blade snaps in two; but the rope on one side is so nearly severed that Louis is able to break it with his hand. This has rendered the ladder useless.

Louis springs to the lamp and extinguishes it by flinging it on the floor of the cellar. But the precaution is vain, as two of the pursuers who are now thronging into the place carry torches.

"Seize him—and after the other!" cries the prior, who is one of the band. "The arch-heretic has flown—a thousand crowns for him, dead or alive!"

"Some of you go round by the back street to intercept him, others mount the ladder!" is the command of the chief of the guard.

"The ladder is useless," says a soldier.

"Cannot any one climb? A large reward to whoever is first through!" cries the prior, pointing to the trap-door above.

The bribe stimulates to exertion. "Stand by the wall," says the soldier to a comrade. "I'll mount on your shoulders."

Almost as quickly done as said. The lithe, active soldier is in a minute on a level with the trap-door, and stretches down his hand for an instrument with which to force open the lock. Louis, though a prisoner, is not in bonds. He springs forward, catches hold of the climber's hand, and gives it such a sudden, vigorous pull, that the man, unable to keep his unsteady footing, falls heavily to the floor. Another precious interval of delay is thus gained. Those minutes have preserved the life of Gerard Martine. He has found refuge under the roof of a humble Huguenot, ready, like Louis, to risk all to save his brother in the faith.

But the heir of La Force is a prisoner in the hands of the officers of the Crown.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### THE EXILES' HOME.

We will now return to England, and the less exciting scenes which are passing there.

In a small apartment on the second floor of a dwelling situated in a manufacturing town sits Adéle la Force. Her surroundings are very different indeed from those amongst which we found her when she was first introduced to the reader in Château la Force. The apartments rented by the exiles consist merely of parlour, sleeping-room, and dressing-room, the last-named being appropriated to the use of Adéle. In it she has her little bed: there is not space for much besides. On that bed, used by day as her table, lie the young maiden's writing materials; and, seated on a footstool, Adéle is engaged in penning a long letter to Felicie, now her only correspondent in France, as for a protracted period nothing has been heard of Louis. The little room is miserably chilly, for rain and hail are falling without, and within there is not even a fire-place.

Adéle's fingers tremble with cold, and it is with difficulty that she guides the pen. There is, indeed, a good fire in the sitting-room, and Elizabeth has told her stepdaughter to bring her writing-case there; but Adéle is wilful, and prefers solitude and discomfort to scribbling away in the presence of Madame la Force. Adéle knows that her father's wife dislikes and disapproves of the close intercourse kept up by letters between the cousins.

"Adéle can learn nothing good from Felicie," Elizabeth once observed to her husband. "I notice that after every letter received from Paris the girl has a fit of depression, and is less disposed to set cheerfully to any useful occupation."

"But we cannot deprive our poor child of the consolation of keeping up that intercourse which is almost her only link with the land of her fathers," was the reply of La Force.

We will glance over Adéle's shoulder as she writes, and in her letter trace some of the workings of a yet wilful, undisciplined heart, struggling against the yoke whose pressure it needed:—

"Your charming letter, *ma bien-aimée* Felicie, has given me more pleasure than my desolate heart has known since we parted—as it seems to me ages ago! I congratulate you a thousand thousand times on your approaching nuptials. Dear *vicomtesse* (I call you so in advance), may your path be as brilliant, as cheerful,

as happy, as your poor Adéle's is dark, miserable, and *triste*. I do not know why I should cast the shadow of my troubles upon you, only it is so sweet to have some friend to sympathize with one's misery; and to sympathize with me is the one thing which my step-mother cannot do. I do not mean to complain of her; madame is very good, and all that, but we can never understand one another. The different senses of the same word in our two languages just describe us two. Madame is sensible (English), and I am *sensible* (French) —a very sensitive plant, which madame handles as if it were a cabbage. I am very delicate, often ailing; but I am almost afraid to complain of my pains and aches. 'You ought not to sit so much in your cold little room'— 'Take a good quick walk; it will warm you'—or, 'Help me with a little cooking for your father; it is an occupation to bring you to the fire: if you worked more, you would be stronger and better.' O Felicie! imagine what physic such advice is to a drooping spirit and a suffering frame! My father thinks his wife perfection; and this (I am almost ashamed to confess my weakness even to my Felicie) often provokes my spirit. Yesterday he said, 'You have a rare example before you in your mother, Adéle.' I was tempted to say, but I had not courage to do so, 'Is there no Frenchwoman, then, for me to copy, that I must have Mr. Page's daughter always held up as a pattern?' I bit my lip and kept

in the words, which would have greatly displeased my father.

"Would you like to know what sort of a boudoir I am writing in now? It is a room not larger than our china closet at home, with no table, no chair, no pictures—only a pallet-bed, a footstool, and a bit of drugget which madame has given me to serve as a carpet. There is scarcely space for my white kitten Bijou to frolic in: she is the only pet that I possess—I may say that she is my sole companion. If I look out of the window, what do I see? Instead of our glorious park, with its magnificent trees, only a view over house-roofs and horrid black chimneys; or, if I look down, a dull, dismal street. Along that street a well-dressed person hardly ever passes; even a sedan-chair is a rare sight here. Oh, for one day in the Paris which you describe with so glowing a pen!

"Your friend Madame la Rouge must be a most fascinating person. Her idea of the six nobles disguised as *paysans* is charming. Oh that my darling brother could be one of the six! He would not have to throw aside the *blouse* and *sabots* to be recognized as a gentleman of France; he would look *distingué* in the rags of a beggar!—Ah, my Louis! shall I ever see thee again? —But I must not write to a *fiancée* on a subject so sad as our loss.

"I see very little of my father. He teaches in two

schools, which lie in different parts of this town. He gives three hours to each, so you may imagine how weary he is before the day's drudgery is over. Madame is always busy, except when my father comes home, and then she attends to nothing but his pleasure and comfort. Madame is embroidering an exquisite table-cover, which she has been working at for six weeks. Ah, Felicie, would that I could send it to you as a bridal present! Madame calls it her *coal-mine* (not a very poetical name), because she expects that, when it is finished, the sum it will bring will supply us with half a year's fuel. Certainly a good fire is not a small comfort: you would think so were you freezing beside me now.

"I hear my father's well-known rap at the street door below: he has at last come home from his work: how wet and tired he will be! I am glad that he has a nice fire: from sounds in the next room I know that madame is stirring it into a blaze. A hot supper will be on the table almost before my father has time to take off his wet cloak. I must pause and go to meet him, for I have not yet seen him to-day. I was too languid to get up for breakfast or early prayers. Adieu for awhile, my charming Felicie! I will sit up to-night to write more."

Adéle threw down her pen, and ran to embrace and welcome her father. The marquis looked pale and tired, and coughed as his wife removed his dripping cloak.

La Force wearily took a seat by the fire, and held out his chilled hands to the blaze. He had had a day of more than usual trial, having been exposed to the vulgar impertinence of a low-bred schoolmistress, and the titterings of saucy girls, who, had they seen the marquis at Château la Force, would scarcely have dared to raise their eyes in his presence. The white streaks in the Huguenot's hair were visibly increasing. Even home had its trials for the exile.

"Adéle, my child, are you ill?" cried the anxious father, grieved to see the change in the looks of his once blooming and lovely daughter. "You have grown pale and thin, my darling; and your poor little hand is like ice." La Force was tenderly stroking the slender hand which rested on his knee.

"It *is* cold, dear father," said Adéle with a shiver; "England has a very trying climate."

"For those who persist in sitting in a draughty, fireless room," observed Elizabeth, who could hardly bear to see the lines of care deepen on the face of her husband.

La Force was tenderly affectionate, and as he looked on his fading daughter, a terrible fear was arising in his mind—"Am I to be bereaved of *both* my children?"

The evening meal was more silent than usual. Adéle had a headache and refused to eat; which took away from her weary father all appetite for his food. Eliza-

beth was suffering from neuralgia, but said nothing about it; perhaps her pain made her feel more irritated against the girl, who never concealed any trouble in order to spare another distress. Adéle never dreamed that her craving for pity and sympathy had selfishness at the root. La Force was a man oppressed with a heavy burden; but he bore it with fortitude, for he leaned on a Friend unseen.

When the cheerless meal was concluded, Madame la Force went into the inner room for her work; so Bertrand and his daughter were left alone. Adéle took her favourite seat on the hearth-rug at her father's feet, resting her hands on his knee. The exile had covered his face with his hand: he felt himself almost worn out, and wondered whether he could keep up the struggle much longer.

"Father," said Adéle abruptly, "I think that trouble makes one wicked; at least it does me. It is much more easy to be religious and good when one is happy."

La Force removed his hand from his brow, and laid it caressingly on the tresses of his young daughter.

"It is easier, perhaps, to carry a light tinsel shield than one of firm, strong metal," he said, with an attempt at a smile. "Perhaps each may look equally well at a *masque,* but the difference is soon seen in the field. That faith is a shield not worthy the name which can bear no heavy blows."

"Misery makes such wicked thoughts come into the mind," said Adéle. "It is not possible to believe that God is love, when He takes away everything that we enjoy, and leaves us nothing but wretchedness." Adéle's eyes brimmed over with tears.

"Such evil thoughts are the fiery darts of the devil, my child; they fall blunted from the shield of true faith."

"I am afraid that I have little faith," sighed Adéle.

"My daughter knows where to seek for more. *Ask, and it shall be given.*"

"But, father, are *you* never tempted to murmur—to think that God has forgotten us?"

La Force did not reply for some moments; then gently made answer:—

"I am often tempted, my child; but God makes for us a way out of temptation. I look to the Cross; I remember what was endured for me there, and I do not, I cannot doubt the love of my Lord."

Elizabeth returned to the sitting-room, with her piece of delicate work in her hand. Flowers, under her skilful fingers, were gradually covering the dark material with brightness and beauty, looking all the more brilliant from the gloominess of the background.

There was but one table in the scantily-furnished room, with a single small lamp in the centre. La Force's writing materials were placed before him by his wife:

he had to prepare lessons for his pupils and write to Duval. Adéle crouched as close to the fire as she could, and amused herself with her white kitten, throwing a ball of worsted here and there for the playful creature to catch. Then Adéle arose, and with Bijou in her arms went up to the table to ask her father for a sheet of paper.

On that table lay a ball of bright red embroidery silk, which madame was converting into roses. Pussy had an idea that all balls were made for the special benefit of kittens, and, springing from Adéle's arms, made a sudden dash at the prize, unfortunately striking against the lamp, and overturning it as she did so. The little lamp was extinguished but not broken by the fall.

The bright fire gave sufficient light to show the mischief done. The marquis's half-written sheet was marred with oil; and a little stream of it, running over the table, had fallen on Elizabeth's beautiful work.

"Destroyed the labour of six weeks! I must begin all over again!" cried Madame la Force. It was enough for a moment to disturb the serenity of the best-tempered of women.

"I am so sorry!—Oh, naughty, naughty Bijou!" cried Adéle.

Elizabeth saw that her husband looked grieved, and recovered her equanimity with an effort.

"We must make the best of the matter," she said,

trying to smile, but with no great success. "Bertrand, you need a warm garment to keep out the cold; there is enough material left, untouched by the oil, to make one. You will not mind a few flowers on the garment, since no one will see them but yourself."

"My love, it is you who always provide me with flowers," said Bertrand la Force, with the gallantry of a young lover. "I shall wear your roses next to my heart."

Warmed by the praise, Elizabeth set cheerfully to her task of refilling and relighting the lamp, and clearing away as well as she could all signs of the mischief done. She then went into the inner room to wash her hands, and returned with a serene countenance, just as the postman's knock was heard at the door.

Adéle ran downstairs to bring the letter, for her parents kept no servant. Elizabeth was cook, housemaid, and sempstress in one.

"Cousin Duval's hand! how well one knows it! he always directs to *Monsieur le Marquis*," said Adéle on her return, as she handed the letter to her father.

La Force broke the seal and opened the folded sheet. It was blank, and contained only a tiny enclosure. At the sight of that enclosure, almost to the alarm of wife and daughter, the exile sank on his knees, clasping the little note in his trembling hands, and burst into tears. Elizabeth had never before seen her husband weep.

The brimming drops were not those of sorrow, but of almost overwhelming delight. "My son! my boy! Oh! thank God! thank God!" broke from the Huguenot's lips.

"Louis!" cried Adéle, darting to her father, and almost snatching the letter out of his hand—"Louis!" she repeated, half wild with delight, so that she could scarcely refrain from bounding about the room in the exuberance of her joy.

With scarcely less pleasure, though more quietly expressed, Madame la Force read the few lines hastily penned by Louis on New-Year's eve, before going to the meeting in the cellar of Casseau:—

"DEAREST, MOST HONOURED OF FATHERS,—I have received the delicious home-letters, and they have made me more happy than words can tell. Cousin Jacques tells me that I have only three minutes in which to write my despatch; and he is directing it in order to save time. Let me just assure you that I am safe and well, and as joyous as I can possibly be before I see you again. I mean to escape and join you as soon as I can;—would that the day were to-morrow!

"Much love to dear mother and Adéle. Tell them that, in spite of Pope and priest, and pleasures more dangerous still, I am a Huguenot to my heart's core. Adieu!—L."

## CHAPTER XIX.

### A SOLEMN SCENE.

THAT little piece of paper, fragrant with happiness and affection, worked like a spell in the home of the exiles. Had they suddenly found themselves transported to Château la Force, all their old friends around them, and the icy chill of winter changed into the balmy breath of June, the transformation would hardly have been greater. La Force felt several years younger; he bent no longer under the pressure of an earthly burden; the clouds above him seemed all to have rolled away. Adéle forgot her delicacy and her troubles; indeed, every one was so engaged in eager talking, making plans, and discussing probabilities, that even the fire was forgotten. It died out, and had to be relighted; Adéle's letter to Felicie helped to get up the blaze. Louis's happy sister was now *ashamed* to send an epistle so full of complaints. Will not their grumblings, doubts, and complainings appear shameful to Christians in another world, when——

> ....." The dawning of day
> Shall chase all the night-clouds of sorrow away "?

Will not the ransomed ones say, " How could I ever have uttered a word of complaint, or have thought that my loving Lord could *make a mistake!* "

Adéle sat up late that night writing, heedless of the cold, for her heart was so warm. It need scarcely be said that this time her effusions were not poured forth to Felicie.

A very different letter arrived on the following morning. It found all the family together; for La Force had taken a chill from the yesterday's rain, and for once consented to stay away from his work. He could not help feeling that at any hour his boy might arrive. The letter was not from the other side of the Channel, and was directed to Mrs. la Force, in the neat but rather formal and stiff handwriting of her younger sister Bridget.

" Poor Bridget is a nice kind creature," thought Adéle, " but what she writes is sure to be very dull and uninteresting. In that dismal Raven's Nest nothing ever happens that is worth putting down on paper."

The colour rose to Elizabeth's cheek as she read, then retreating, left it exceedingly pale. She silently handed the letter to her husband. Poor Bridget's simple epistle ran thus, with much interlining :—

" Oh ! dear sister, we are in *such* trouble. You know

that papa has been ailing for a long, *long* time. We could not find out what was the matter, for he *would not hear* of sending for a doctor. Now he has taken to his bed, and does not attempt to rise. He can hardly utter a word, only *groans*, and tastes not a morsel of food. Our dear parson Day and his wife are *so* good—they help us in every way that they can; but, oh! I wish that *you* could be here. Mr. Day insisted on sending for Dr. Brind; and when he saw papa he shook his head and said, 'He cannot last long; I should have been sent for before.' Lilly and I do not know what to do. We both long to have our darling wise sister to comfort and help us."

"You should go to them, my love," said La Force, as he handed back the letter to his wife, who passed it on to Adéle.

"But when you are unwell, and without a servant, how can I leave you?" said Elizabeth, who felt drawn in opposite directions.

"Oh! I will take care of father; nurse him, sing to him, read to him!" exclaimed Adéle with a beaming face.

"But can you cook for him, trim the lamp for him, make the beds, dust, and keep all neat?" asked Elizabeth, her countenance and tone expressing more than a doubt.

"My Adéle will do all that she can," said the marquis

smiling, "and her father will be easily pleased. I think that your course of duty is clear."

Elizabeth thought so too, and she was not one to shrink from duty; but it cost her more than any one guessed to make a long journey in the depth of winter, for her neuralgia had increased almost to agony. Madame la Force, for the sake of economy, travelled on the outside of a coach: the reader need hardly be reminded that in the days of the Second James, the easy transit from place to place by means of railways was altogether a thing unknown. Anxious about her husband, distressed about her father, in violent physical pain, with the rain and sleet forcing their way through an old umbrella, which suddenly developed half a dozen rents, Elizabeth was jogged over miserable roads, till long after nightfall, terribly chilled, she reached the halting-place nearest the home of her childhood. Raven's Nest was more than a mile's distance from the inn, from which lights and a blazing fire cast a cheerful glow, very tempting to weary travellers.

The hostler came out to look after the horses, and glanced up at the solitary shivering traveller perched on high.

"You gets down here," said he; "just hand me your luggage."

Elizabeth was so numbed with cold that she had hardly power to descend from her lofty place. When

the light of the lamp which the hostler carried fell on her face, the man recognized her at once.

"You'll be a-going to Raven's Nest, mistress," he said, "where the squire's lying sick. Ye'll want a horse, or some kind of conveyance. Just step inside for a warm, and a drop of something to keep out the cold, while I go to see what can be done."

"No, no, John, I mean to walk; it will do more to warm me than anything else."

"I'se get a lad to carry yer bundle, and a lamp—"

"Thanks, but I will carry it myself; and as for light, I know every inch of the way, and could find the house in the dark." The former lady of Château la Force had not even the coppers left in her purse with which to pay for a guide!

Resolutely the lady set out on a night dark and bitterly cold, herself carrying her bundle. Elizabeth's faith was not weak; hers was the deep conviction of the heart, not evaporating in sensibility, but prompting her to calm, steady, resolute action. What God gave her to do she would do, and trust to Him for strength to fulfil her duty.

Adéle, notwithstanding the impetus given to her by joy and hope, and a secret wish to show that she could do nearly if not quite as well as her step-mother, found it very difficult indeed to fill Elizabeth's place. The French *demoiselle* had rather despised mere house-

keeping qualifications, the power to make a shilling go as far as a shilling could go. Adéle had not cared to acquire any knowledge of cookery, and had a rooted aversion to having anything to do with raw meat. The cleaning of a lamp made taper fingers dirty, and in the hands of Adéle lamps were as difficult to manage as children spoiled and perverse. Elizabeth's last charge to Adéle had been to prepare a hot posset for her father; she had told the girl how to do it, and poor Adéle tried hard to fulfil the charge. How came the posset to smell of smoke? When Adéle brought the triumph of her art to her father, he smiled, thanked her, took a spoonful from the cup, and did not venture upon a second. Twice in one day did Adéle let the fire out, and how to light it again was almost as great a puzzle as how to unloose the Gordian knot. Safety matches were not dreamed of in those days; sparks were produced by striking steel on flint, and those sparks falling on a tinder-box were carefully breathed on, that a brimstone-tipped bit of wood might be ignited. Adéle put her little hand on the steel, and hit and hit and struck and struck, till she hurt her own knuckles; but if a spark came, it was certain to die. At first the girl laughed at her own awkwardness, but she soon grew impatient over the unmanageable flint and steel. Perhaps Adéle would never have succeeded in lighting her fire had not her father come to her help.

"Oh, I was never born to be a housemaid!" exclaimed Adéle, as the marquis took the flint and steel from her poor bruised hand.

"My child," said La Force, with playful good-humour, "if you have been dreaming that you are the daughter of a peer, I fear that you have scarcely yet opened your eyes to the fact that you are a poor school-teacher's child. But," he added more gravely, "poverty is neither a disgrace nor an evil to those who are *rich in faith.*"

In the meantime, Elizabeth, in a state of exceeding weariness, had reached her father's dreary home. There was no need to knock; her sisters, who had been anxiously watching for her coming, flung open the door wide, threw themselves into her arms, and wept.

"We have been so longing to see you!" cried Lilly.

"We were sure that you would come," sobbed Bridget.

"Father?" was the only word which Elizabeth uttered, her anxious eyes asking the question which she was unable to speak.

"He has eaten nothing—said nothing since yesterday; we both sat up with him all night."

Elizabeth hurried up the dark staircase; she needed no light to find her way into the chamber where her dying parent lay. The clergyman and doctor were seated beside him, the latter with one hand on the patient's pulse, and the other on his own watch. The first glance

at the poor old man on the bed told that he was indeed passing through the dark valley.

"Father!" said Elizabeth softly, as she bent over the sufferer. The hollow eyes unclosed for a moment, her name came from the ashen lips, and then eyes and lips again closed, never to reopen on earth. A few spasms convulsed the frame; the sands of life had almost run out. Not ten minutes had elapsed after Elizabeth's arrival ere Page's spirit had passed to its awful account. He expired, supported in the arms of his eldest daughter, with his head on her breast.

We will pass lightly over that night and the sad day that succeeded. When the need for exertion ceased, and not till then, Elizabeth's strength gave way. Page died on a Thursday night; throughout the Friday Madame la Force was unable to leave her bed. Mr. and Mrs. Day undertook all arrangements, the former having been appointed sole executor by Mr. Page. A will, duly witnessed, signed, and sealed, was found in a desk. It was terse, and characteristic of the testator. Page bequeathed his property to his daughters, to be divided in equal portions amongst them. He desired that his funeral should take place as quickly as possible after his death, "with no idle forms, no needless expense." The miser strictly forbade conformity to existing customs; "mourning, pall, and coffin" were prohibited as "an idle waste of money."

Elizabeth, with effort, rose on the Saturday morning, to attend her parent's simple funeral, and pay the last tribute of respect to one who had done little to earn the esteem even of his children. Happily, from a change of wind, the day was mild for the season.

After the service was over, and the funeral party had returned to the dreary house, Mr. Day requested Madame la Force to come with her sisters, and remain in the vicarage with himself and his wife.

Elizabeth gratefully accepted the kind invitation for Lilly and Bridget; it relieved her for the present of anxiety on their account. "As for myself," said the marquis's wife, "I must hasten back at once. I left my husband far from well, and we are in daily hopes of the arrival of our boy; nothing but a parent's illness would have induced me to leave home, even for a day. I must be back to-night, as I would not travel on Sunday. Add to your many acts of kindness that of taking a place for me in the coach which starts at mid-day."

Mr. Day was too wise and kind to offer any opposition to Elizabeth's wish. He then, in a delicate way, spoke to her of necessary business. The executor had been grieved and disappointed to find that hardly any property had been left. Raven's Nest could, of course, be sold; but it had been left unrepaired for so many years that a purchaser could with difficulty be found, and even if found, the sum realized by sale must be

small. Mr. Day scarcely touched on the state of the furniture; Elizabeth knew too well that if put up to auction, rickety chairs and tables and cracked crockery would bring in little indeed.

Elizabeth, when she heard of the poverty of the deceased, silently reproached herself with having ever misjudged a parent. "I attributed to penuriousness," she said to herself, "that which was only an honourable desire to keep out of debt."

After bidding a loving farewell to her sisters, thankful that God had raised up for them such kind protectors, Madame la Force again took her place on the top of a coach, and after a tiring journey arrived at her home. The events of the last three days seemed to Elizabeth, like a long sad dream. But there was calm satisfaction in her heart from a sense of duty performed, and deep joy from being again with her husband, and finding him better than she had ventured to hope. Happiness is one of the best of medicines, and no doctor's prescription could have done so much for the health either of the marquis or Adéle as Louis's tiny letter had done.

## CHAPTER XX.

### THE GRAND MONARCH.

But in the meantime where was Louis himself?

Whilst the La Force family were rejoicing over the safety of the Huguenot youth, the object of their affection, the cause of their joy, was himself in sore tribulation, shut up, as a state prisoner, within the gloomy walls of the dreaded Bastille.

Louis's trial had been a mere form—his condemnation was sure. The page had not only aided the escape of a ringleader of the heretics, but he had struck down an officer of the Crown in the very act of executing the monarch's commands. Death was the punishment for such a crime. Louis, a little paler than usual, but with a countenance calm and serene, heard his sentence pronounced, and silently thanked the Lord for counting him worthy of suffering for Christ's sake, and calling him so early to join the noble army of martyrs.

But the fate of one so young, so attractive, so well known at court, roused great sympathy in high quarters.

The dauphine, a kind-hearted princess, interceded, even with tears, for her favourite page. The letters of Louis to his family, which had been taken from him at the time of his arrest, were read with interest and compassion. That from such a pinnacle of innocent happiness there should be but one terrible step to the block, awoke pity even in worldly hearts. There were but two men who felt anything like satisfaction in the sentence passed upon young La Force; the one was the stern, vindictive prior, the other was Fontainebleu, the favourite courtier of the King. This nobleman hoped that the death of the heir to the large estate which he himself held only in trust, would convert temporary enjoyment of the property into permanent possession.

Let us enter for a few moments the splendid audience-chamber of the "Grand Monarch," brilliant with mirrors and gilding, more brilliant from the splendidly-attired assembly within. What gorgeous robes! what magnificent jewels!—all the pomp and vanity of the world appears before us. The most formal etiquette is observed in the presence of the King. To all but a few of the highest rank it would be an unpardonable crime to sit down in the presence of one regarded almost as a god upon earth. On a giddy pinnacle of grandeur stood the despot of France, and its height had turned his brain. Any one who opposed the monarch's will should be as an insect to be crushed beneath his proud foot.

And yet Louis XIV. was by no means devoid of kindliness of heart, as was afterwards shown by his chivalrous courtesy to the exiled royal family of England. When the dauphine pleaded that to risk life to save that of a fellow-creature was hardly a sufficient crime to bring a brave boy to the block, to quench in blood a life of such singular promise, the stately Louis lent an attentive ear. He had considered the father of that boy to be the noblest and bravest of all his peers. He had regretted the exile of which his own mandate had been the cause; and the king had no wish to strike another, and a more deadly blow, at the man whom he already had ruined.

The monarch turned towards Madame de Maintenon, who was indeed his wife and queen, though royal pride denied her the title. This lady wore the crimson velvet mantle of royal state, and had more influence over the king than was possessed by any other person. Fontainebleu, who was in attendance, listened anxiously for her reply to the question asked by the ruler of France.

"What say you? shall we accede to the wishes of our royal daughter, and grant a gracious pardon to the young rebel?"

Madame de Maintenon, in the later part of her strange career, affected great zeal for the Church of Rome. She thought this a favourable opportunity for acquiring

merit in the eyes of a superstitious King by making a convert instead of a martyr.

"If I might presume to offer an opinion, sire," the lady replied, "I should say that the best course to pursue would be to offer the young rebel life, and even a return to your Majesty's favour, on the sole condition of his renouncing heretic errors, and praying to be received into the bosom of our holy Church."

Fontainebleu, who was alarmed at the prospect of young La Force accepting such a condition, as he himself would certainly have done in his place, looked eager to speak, but was restrained by etiquette from uttering a word in the royal presence. The King, however, noticed the look and the forward gesture, and deigned to grant the courtier an opportunity of expressing his thoughts.

"My lord of Fontainebleu knows the young heretic well," said the monarch; "is it his opinion that the youth will yield and accept our mercy?"

"Your Majesty's power is well-nigh unlimited," said the courtier; "but not even the Sovereign of France can bend the will of a proud La Force."

The remark nettled the King, as the speaker had intended that it should. The words had been true as regarded the past. The grand monarch had not succeeded in turning the marquis one step, one hair's-breadth, from the straight path which he trod; but the

despot silently vowed that the words should *not* be true as regarded the future. The ruler of millions could and would subdue the spirit not only of the younger but of the elder La Force.

"Madame," said the King, turning courteously towards the dauphine, "any request made by you demands, and shall have, our serious consideration. We must, however, defer giving an immediate reply. Rest assured that we have every desire to spare the forfeited life of your page. Young La Force shall be removed for the present to the Monastery of the Holy Sponge, where we hope that he may profit, more than he did before, by the prayers and exhortations of the ghostly fathers." By a dignified wave of his jewelled hand, the great monarch then put an end to all further discussion upon the subject.

An hour later Louis la Force, in his dungeon, heard the clank of steel and the measured tread of soldiers approaching the cell.

"The hour is come!" he said, folding his arms. "The soldiers are sent to lead me forth to execution. May the Lord give me strength to endure to the last, to remain faithful unto death!"

But the hour of death had not come. Was it with a sense of relief, or a sense of pain, that the youth found himself on his way to the gloomy monastery where he had already suffered so much? Perhaps there was

a mingling of both feelings, for with the young life is sweet and hope is strong. Never had Louis known such intense happiness as just before the time when he was called so suddenly to leave it. As with a firm step and undaunted bearing the youthful Huguenot crossed the threshold of his monastic prison, then turned to give one look at the blue sky which would soon be shut out from his view, the thought in his mind was this: "Iron bolts and bars may shut me in, watchful enemies surround, and a monarch condemn, but there is One above all, and, if it be His will, I shall yet behold my father again!"

## CHAPTER XXI.

### FAITH TRIED.

"Judge not the working of his brain
And of his heart thou canst not see:
What seems to thy dim eyes a stain,
In God's pure sight may only be
A scar, won from some well-fought field
Where thou wouldst only shrink and yield."

It would have been well if Adéle had acted in the spirit suggested by these admirable lines; but, on the contrary, she *did* judge another, and that hardly and unjustly. Elizabeth la Force's self-control was set down to want of feeling.

"Madame neither weeps with the mourner nor rejoices with the happy," thought the girl. "Who would believe that my step-mother has just come from a father's death-bed, or that she shares our delight in the prospect of soon seeing darling Louis! Her heart must be made of leather. I hate people who are like clocks, which go on with cold precision striking the hours, whether there be a wedding or a funeral in the house."

Adéle would have thought very differently of Elizabeth could she have seen the workings of the Englishwoman's heart. Madame la Force never thought of her unhappy parent without an acute pang, nor of Louis without a silent thanksgiving. Worn out as she was with weariness and physical pain, Elizabeth was also tried with many cares with which she burdened no one. The journeys which she had taken had almost emptied her slender purse; and the destruction of the piece of embroidery on which she had reckoned to supply it, was no light matter to one who had an abhorrence of debt. The supply of coals was nearly expended, and the lady was afraid to order more for which she could not pay.

Elizabeth was also anxious about her two sisters, left almost unprovided for, and unfitted by lives of long privation, and latterly by broken rest at night, for earning their subsistence by their own efforts. Lilly and Bridget knew nothing of the world; they had been almost entirely excluded from intercourse with their fellow-creatures; they were like plants reared in a cellar: how could they fight the battle of life as their elder sister was doing? When Elizabeth was pondering over these troubles, it is hardly to be wondered at that her manner appeared to Adéle hard and cold. The struggle which Elizabeth was bravely sustaining would have laid Adéle prostrate and weeping, *désolée,* as she would herself have expressed it.

But Elizabeth was no perfect character, and pent-up sorrow did occasionally find vent in what Adéle called "very bad temper." When Elizabeth, on the Monday morning following her return, made up the week's accounts, and found that Adéle had spent in three days what ought to have sufficed for seven, the matron's brow was knit into a frown, and she angrily said, "I will take good care, child, never to leave the house-keeping again in your hands."

Adéle returned the frown with interest. She hated to be called "child" by her English step-mother, and all her pride rose in arms at anything like a sharp rebuke from one whom she chose to consider as of inferior birth to her own. With pert words and an insolent manner, which gave pain—she meant them to give pain—Adéle quitted the room, and shut herself up in her own. She determined not to make her appearance again till her father came home. "It is intolerable," Adéle muttered to herself, "to be subjected to the temper of such a peevish, hateful woman!"

Often did Adéle run to her little window and look down into the street, with a vague hope that either her brother might himself appear, or that a letter from him might arrive. What a fairy rainbow-tinted castle in the air Adéle built of hopes founded on the return of her idolized Louis!

La Force's coming home from his work in the schools

was usually the event of the day. On this Monday his looks made his watchful wife uneasy.

"Bertrand is gradually wearing himself out," thought Elizabeth; "and I can do so little to help one for whom I would gladly lay down my life."

La Force certainly looked tired and thin, but he was in excellent spirits. If his cheerfulness did not rise to the point of playfulness, it was from respect to the feelings of a wife who had so recently lost a parent. His heart was full of gratitude, hope, and peace.

It was the calm before a storm. After the afternoon meal, which was always ready when La Force returned from his round, as the short winter's day approached its close, the welcome sound of the postman's knock made every one rise from table. Every heart beat quicker with pleasant expectation. Adéle, a swift-footed messenger—for hope gave her speed—sprang out of the room, flew down the stairs, and soon returned with two letters in her hand. One of these was very large, with a red seal of formidable size. Adéle had once before seen a despatch resembling it, and the outward appearance of the document gave to all present a thrill of apprehension. Could anything good come with the ominous signature of the French minister on the cover?

The seal of the official communication was that which La Force broke first, even though the other, in the handwriting of Jacques, might contain a letter from Louis.

The countenance of the marquis became of an ashen hue as he read the following despatch :—

"Monsieur le Marquis la Force, it is my painful office to inform you that your son Louis has committed a very serious crime, which has subjected him to the severest penalty of the law. He has not only procured the escape of a criminal, but has violently struck an officer of his Majesty when executing the royal commands. For these offences Louis la Force has been condemned to lose his head, and the execution of this sentence is appointed to take place on the fifteenth day of the current month. But his gracious Majesty, taking into consideration the former services rendered to the State by your house, holds out to you one last opportunity of procuring at once your own pardon and that of your son. If before the fifteenth you make your appearance in Paris, and there openly abjure your heretical errors, and, receiving absolution, become obedient to Holy Church, not only you yourself but your son will receive his Majesty's gracious pardon, and be even restored to all your ancestral rights. His Majesty commands me to say that this is the last time that mercy will be offered; and that, if you obstinately persist in your errors, the law shall take its course, and Louis la Force shall die on the scaffold. I have the honour," etc.

Silently La Force gave the terrible letter to his wife and daughter. Silently he opened that of Jacques,

which gave distressing confirmation of the evil tidings, with particulars which drew from the father's blanched lips the exclamations, "My own boy!—my noble boy!"

Adéle sank on her knees before her father, her whole frame convulsed with passionate emotion.

"O father—father!" she exclaimed, "all is in your hands. You will never, never suffer our darling to die!" La Force continuing to gaze on the letter of his cousin, either would not hear or could not reply. Elizabeth, seated at the table, had buried her face in her hands. She was engaged in agonized prayer.

"Father!" again gasped Adéle, grasping with both hands the arm of La Force as if to force attention, "you will yield now to the King; you will never sacrifice your own—your only son!"

"Be silent, temptress! I must not hear you!" said the wretched father, rising and freeing himself from her clinging hands. "Go, pray—not to man, but to Him who is King of kings; I must be alone with my God!" With unsteady step, like one who has received a mortal wound, La Force sought the inner apartment, closing the door behind him.

Adéle sprang up from her knees and desperately turned to her mother. "He will not hear me—he casts me off—but he will hear *you*. Oh! entreat him—implore him to save our Louis!"

Elizabeth raised her tear-stained face, and with emo-

tion replied, "I cannot, dare not, entreat your father to imperil his soul."

This answer made Adéle's anguish blaze up into furious rage. She looked on her step-mother as an enemy; and in her wild, frenzied excitement, uttered words which in a calmer moment she never would have spoken. All past jealousies, prejudices, misunderstandings, culminated in one uncontrollable burst of passion.

"Oh! cruel—heartless—wicked woman!" exclaimed Adéle, clenching her hand as if to strike, and raising her voice almost to a shriek of fury, "you will have my brother's blood on your hands—and *mine*, for I will not survive Lòuis! I will die—you will be the murderess of us both!"

Without waiting for a reply, Adéle dashed wildly out of the room, banging the door behind her. She did not go to her own little room; it was too close to where her father was, and seemed too narrow to contain her in the fierce mood which bordered on madness. Down the stairs, through the doorway, into the street, fled the miserable girl; and seeking intuitively some wide open space, Adéle made her way into the country beyond the town. What cared she that no covering was on her head, no wrap on her shoulders! what cared she that the red, rayless globe of the sun had almost disappeared, and that heavy clouds were lowering above her! Adéle was as one possessed by an evil spirit; she could not

reason, she could hardly think—she was maddened by utter misery. Adéle uttered no word but the name of her brother; there were no tears in her eyes—she was too wretched even to weep!

When Adéle, panting for breath, stopped at length in her wild course, she was far, she knew not how far, from home. Large flakes of snow were falling from the darkened sky; faster and faster they fell, till every trace of a path was obliterated from view. The whiteness of the ground alone rendered it visible, for the moonless, starless, bitterly cold night had set in. Adéle knew not where she was; she could not return if she wished to do so, and not a single light in any direction showed that a dwelling was near. Exhausted, shivering, lost in the snow, there seemed to be nothing before the daughter of La Force but to lie down—and die!

## CHAPTER XXII.

### FLIGHT.

"It is not right, Belinde, it is not seemly; the world itself will condemn you if you are seen at the theatre whilst a sentence of death is hanging over our unhappy young cousin." Thus pleaded Jacques Duval with his wife, as she was preparing to go out with Felicie to a public place of amusement.

"I am not responsible for the folly of a young fanatic, who has chosen to run his head into a lion's mouth," was Belinde's reply, as she drew the embroidered glove over her jewelled fingers. "I wish to show publicly that I disclaim connection with Louis la Force."

"Of course we are sorry for the handsome youth," said the flippant Felicie; "but it will do Louis in his prison no good to have us sit moping at home. It is very shocking to think of the axe falling on the neck of so charming a cousin; but—but—I suppose that all must die sooner or later."

Yes, careless worldling! Death is not far from any

one. What if his solemn shadow be even now falling on the threshold over which thou dost trip so lightly!

The ladies, in their rustling silks, descended the staircase. Jacques heard the sound of the wheels of their coach as it was driven away. The good man's heart was exceedingly sore. He questioned himself as to whether it had been right or wise to introduce Louis to the Huguenot meeting, which had proved a step to the scaffold. Jacques taxed himself with imprudence, and was so absorbed in painful thought that he noticed not that some one with light, noiseless step had entered the room, till a low voice whispered, "Cousin Duval!"

Jacques started up in amazement. Was it Louis or his ghost that was now standing beside him? Duval could scarce stammer out, "How came you here?"

"I had tried to escape from the monastery twice before; this third time I succeeded. I leaped a height—never mind how great; I was mercifully preserved from breaking a bone. Now I do not wish to bring you into trouble, Cousin Duval," continued Louis, speaking in low, rapid tones; "perhaps the bloodhounds will trace me here. But I can't get clear in my convent dress; this is almost as bad as a page's. Can you help me with a little money, and something in the way of a disguise?"

"A disguise!" repeated Jacques, looking bewildered.

"Your wife said something about *sabots* and *blouses* ready for some masquerade," said Louis, who had well thought over his plans.

The face of Duval brightened a little. "I think there's a bundle of such things kept in madame's boudoir," he observed.

"Let's seek them out at once," exclaimed Louis. "With scissors to clip off my locks, I can transform myself into a peasant in less than five minutes."

Jacques, trembling with eagerness, led the way into a side-room, where, in a large ottoman, sundry things required for the masque were kept. Duval lifted the lid, and a bundle of some size was soon pulled out, and its contents scattered on the carpet. A pair of scissors was amongst them. A large fire was burning in the grate; Louis's long locks were soon curling and blackening in the flames. But great was his surprise when Duval's capacious wig followed! The whole room was pervaded with the odour of burning hair.

"Cousin! what are you doing?" exclaimed Louis.

"I am going to disguise myself too; we will escape together to England, and leave this den of corruption for ever."

"But your wife—Felicie—"

"They have chosen their own path and their own protector," said the Huguenot bitterly. "I leave them

this house and all that is in it; they will soon have another home. I will peril my soul no longer, nor my life either," he added; "for I am a suspected person already, and you will be sure to be looked for in your relative's dwelling. I do not want to end my days either in the Bastille or on the scaffold."

Whilst he was speaking, Louis's appearance was undergoing a very rapid transformation. Blackened cork was amongst the other paraphernalia for masquerading, and the fair, smooth lips and chin of the dauphine's page were darkened as if by three days' growth of hair.

The boudoir was adorned with mirrors, and Louis laughed to behold his own reflection.

"Adéle would not know me," he said; "and I can speak the rough language that country-folk speak.—Hated black dress, go after the hair!—Cousin, you must let me transmogrify you too. The flames must burn up your goodly clothes also—gold lace and all. What a smell of burning there is in the room! I must let in fresh air, or we shall be smothered."

Whilst Louis, with quick, skilful fingers, played the valet and helped Jacques to assume his strange dress, and destroy the old one, so as to leave no clew to his manner of flight, the youth chatted merrily, but in a low tone of voice, stopping ever and anon to throw a fresh fagot on the fire.

"Cousin, you must take not only gold coin about you,

but silver and copper too; for if we changed a louis-d'or we should betray ourselves at once. We must content ourselves with peasants' fare, and eat black bread with relish. Cousin Duval, you really make a capital peasant to look at; only you must not talk—you must leave that to me—nor bow as if you were in a saloon, nor be too polite, nor turn out your toes. Swing your arms heavily —like this."

When the cousins were thoroughly disguised, Louis deftly rolled up the bundle of blouses again, put it into the ottoman, and closed down the lid. He caught up and burned every fragment that might have awakened suspicion.

"Ah! the buttons won't burn, nor the buckles; we must conceal them about our persons. If one were found it would tell a tale."

Louis was full of a boyish love of adventure, which gave zest even to danger, and the prospect of rejoining his family increased the buoyancy of his spirits. With poor Jacques the case was very different: he had passed the age when adventure has charms, and was extremely unhappy at the thought of leaving his family behind. It was sheer necessity that was driving the poor Huguenot from his home, but it was necessity which brooked no delay.

"We have but one difficulty now," observed Louis, after all preparations had been made; "it is that of

passing your porter. I was rather surprised at his not questioning me at my entrance; he seemed half asleep."

"Honest Pierre takes care always to be half asleep when it would be inconvenient to his master to have him awake," observed Jacques. "Were it not for the good fellow's dumb fidelity, I should hardly have been able so often to come home late from Casseau's."

"You think that he may be depended on?" inquired Louis.

"As a watch-dog might be," replied Jacques.

The porter was not asleep, but gave a surprised, questioning look, when two men, apparently peasants, approached him.

"Go to sleep again, honest Pierre," said Jacques, in his familiar voice, as he slipped a gold piece into his servant's hand. "There is no need for you to awake again until your mistress come home."

Pierre nodded, smiled, rose and opened the gate; then silently watched while the two men in blouses passed forth.

Quietly Louis and his cousin threaded the streets of Paris: they were unchallenged, hardly noticed, till, beyond even the suburbs, they stood on the snowy plain outside the city.

Then poor Jacques, with a heavy heart, turned to take a last look of beautiful Paris, which he never again

would behold. A faint light spread over the royal city from the innumerable lamps in its streets, the fires and candles in all its dwellings. But in one quarter there was a red flush, which increased in brightness, whilst over it dark smoke-clouds hung.

"There must be a fire somewhere in that quarter," said Jacques.

A simple observation, carelessly made, and quickly forgotten; for a fire in a large metropolis is no unusual occurrence. It was well for Duval that he knew not how nearly he himself was interested in the result of that fire. It was well that he could not see the horrors enacted in a crowded theatre, when the curtain caught fire, and the conflagration rapidly spread to the back-scenes, then leaped from gilded pillar to pillar, till the whole building was wrapped in a glowing blaze! It was well for Jacques that he could not hear the cries, the shrieks of crowds struggling to quit the burning theatre, pushing, trampling down, crushing each other, in the vain attempt to escape the fiery death! It was well that, when on the next day the charred remains of what had been two women, only recognized by their half-melted ornaments, were borne on stretchers to his house, he was not there to look on the ghastly forms! When poor Felicie had lightly said, "All must die sooner or later," little did she know that she would not survive to see another dawn. She and her mother had gone to a theatre to seek

pleasure, and had found a fiery death. A father and husband's heaven-bestowed authority had been despised and his will disobeyed; but a mandate had come that could neither be disobeyed nor disregarded; the selfish, worldly apostates had suddenly been summoned to their awful account.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### IN THE SNOW.

Over Adéle la Force also hung the shadow of death; not in dense clouds of stifling smoke, but in the white shroud of snow, which she felt would be her winding-sheet. If Adéle should remain in the open field or road (she could not distinguish on which she stood), it was impossible that she should survive until morning. A drowsy feeling was stealing over her, and Adéle had often heard that from sleep, under such circumstances, there is no awakening on earth. Death was to Adéle as a terrible phantom approaching nearer and nearer, with slow but steady step. Weights appeared to be fastened to the poor girl's feet, so that she had no power to flee. Adéle was as the hapless bird bewitched by the serpent's glittering eye. In anguish and remorse she recalled her own menace, "*I will die*," uttered in a moment of passion. Was not the Lord taking her at her word? Adéle knew that she was not fit to die: death was to her no angel coming to

take her to a heavenly home, but a fearful messenger of wrath.

"This very day," thought the wretched girl, "I have been as Satan to my father—a temptress; even he bade me begone! I have been most insolent to my mother; and oh, how rebellious against my God! The spirit of my martyred Louis will rise from the scaffold, bright, glorious, and blessed; but I—I—shall never see him again. Death will not re-unite us!" The thought was agony. Adéle sank in the snow, feeling that she should rise from it no more. She pressed her half-frozen hands together, but her lips could only gasp forth, "Mercy! mercy!" then her eyes heavily closed, and even consciousness fled.

It must be urgent business indeed that induces any one to travel on a night like this; yet three mounted men, one carrying a lantern, are riding along the snow-covered road, hardly able to see where they are going, so thickly fall the white flakes from above. At every step taken by the horses they sink up to the fetlocks in snow.

"Are you certain, sir, that you can find your way?" inquired the eldest of the three of a young Englishman, who was the one supplied with a lantern.

"I know every inch of the ground," was the reply. "We are taking a short cut through a part of my father's estate, doing which will save you a good half-

mile. But I would fain persuade you, gentlemen, to pass the rest of the night under my father's roof; he—Sir Miles Grey—would be proud to welcome Huguenot exiles. There you could rest, and proceed to the town in the morning."

"I can hardly endure to wait. Oh, if you knew the impatience which spurs me on!" cried the youngest of the party, who spoke with a French accent.—"But perhaps, Cousin Jacques, for you it would be better—"

"To warm myself at a good fire, and not go wandering about on a freezing night like this, to perish with cold," said Duval, for it was he. "I am not an impatient boy like you. I am sure that we are much indebted to Mr. Grey for his offer of hospitality, and I esteem it a most fortunate occurrence that we chanced to meet with him at the inn."

"Let us turn our horses to the right," said Eustace Grey; "we shall see the lights in our Hall as soon as we pass yon clump of trees."

"What is that object close to yon bush?" cried Louis la Force, as the light of the lantern fell on a little heap.

"Only a snow-drift," was the young Englishman's reply.

"Not so; it is a human being, and perishing!" exclaimed Louis, springing down from his horse, and throwing the bridle on its neck. "I pray you, give me the lantern."

As rapidly as the deep snow would permit, the young La Force made his way to the spot, where indeed a human form was lying. He dashed the thick covering aside, and raised a senseless body in his arms, then exclaimed in accents of horror, "It is the corpse of my only sister!"

"Life may linger yet," cried Grey; "let us bear her at once to our house. Take her before you on your horse."

Pulling off his cloak, Louis enveloped in it the slight fair form of Adéle, her dark locks, heavy with snow, hanging over his shoulder. Just as he was about to remount his horse, pressing to his beating heart what appeared to be a figure of ice, a light, not stationary, but moving, appeared in the distance. Through the chill, frosty night air, came a reiterated call—"Adéle! Adéle!"

"It is my father's voice!" exclaimed Louis; and raising his own to its highest power, again and again he repeated the word "Father!" Louis dared not move one step to meet one whom he had so intensely desired to see. His first care must be to preserve Adéle, if indeed she were not beyond reach of aid. Oh, what a terrible shadow had the wilfulness of the poor girl cast over what would otherwise have been the brightest moment in the life of her father and brother, as well as her own!

La Force, who in terrible anguish had for hours been searching in vain for his child, heard the shout of his son, but thought at first that his senses must have deceived him. With renewed energy, with a wild hope which seemed to himself almost madness, La Force pressed on to the spot from where the voice had come, and where a lantern's light showed indistinctly forms on horseback. Struggling to make his speed match his impatience, the marquis actually succeeded in overtaking the equestrians; for the horse of Louis, floundering in the snow, had fallen under its double weight. It was thus that in cold, darkness, and fear, without time even for an embrace, the Marquis la Force met his long-lost son.

Borne to the horse of Sir Miles Grey, which happily was not far off, every means was employed to restore animation to the half-frozen Adéle. The marquis sent a messenger to relieve the anxiety of his wife, and Elizabeth herself accompanied him on his way back.

"O mother!" exclaimed Louis, as they embraced, "Adéle has not yet spoken a word! I fear—I fear—she will never again open her eyes!"

"She is in God's hands, dear boy," said Elizabeth: "has He not rescued you, and given you back to our prayers from the very gates of the grave?"

Elizabeth showed readiness of resource and unwearying perseverance in carrying out the directions of the

doctor, who had been hastily summoned by Lady Grey. But for hours all efforts appeared to be made in vain; the life-spark was all but extinguished.

At length, however, a faint sigh—a moan—showed that yet the poor sufferer breathed. With intense thankfulness, with tearful joy, La Force and Louis received the tidings, "She lives; she has opened her eyes!"

But for weeks it appeared that Adéle was but spared to endure lengthened torture. The exposure of that terrible night had brought on rheumatic fever, a dangerous illness accompanied by agonizing pain. A heavy price indeed had poor Adéle to pay for her wilful folly. La Force and his wife nursed the invalid night and day, Elizabeth taking the heavier share of the work. Louis for long was not suffered to enter the sick-room, lest the sight of him, the agitation of a meeting, should increase the sufferer's fever. But La Force whispered to his daughter the joyful tidings of a brother's safety: Adéle received them with tears.

Elizabeth's strength gave way under the long strain of nursing. Lady Grey suggested hiring a helper, at least to sit up at night.

"I have a dear, kind sister," said Madame la Force; and Bridget was accordingly sent for. Her gentle ministrations in the sick-room made her a comfort to all; and Adéle learned to value one whom she had formerly almost despised.

Much that was profitable was learned by poor Adéle in her darkened chamber, when she knew not whether she ever should quit it but as a confirmed invalid or a helpless cripple. She learned that to struggle against God's chastising hand is indeed to "kick against the pricks;" that the sorrows which a merciful Father sends are easier to bear than those which our wilfulness brings on ourselves. Adéle learned to appreciate goodness in others, and to feel herself utterly unworthy of the kindness which she received. She was humbled at last—her proud will was subdued; she had learned her painful lesson, and rested in meek submission at the Master's feet.

After a while the brother and sister were permitted to meet. With noiseless step Louis entered the sick-room, and then bent over the sufferer's pillow. His heart bled at the change which he saw in one whom he had left radiant in youthful beauty. Adéle's rich locks had been all clipped off, her eyes were sunken, her features drawn with pain. Yet sweet and thankful was her smile as she gazed on the bright countenance of him for whom she had so passionately mourned.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### PLANS.

A SHORT time afterwards the following conversation occurred between Sir Miles Grey and his son Eustace, in the library of the mansion where the La Forces were experiencing such generous hospitality.

"I am as anxious, Eustace, as yourself," said the former, "to do something for these sufferers for conscience' sake. But I shrink from offering pecuniary assistance to such a man as the Marquis la Force."

"He would shrink more from accepting it," was Eustace's reply. "The marquis would rather earn a dry crust than live in luxury on the bounty of others. But look around you, father. Is not this library of yours in a state of most admired disorder, the shelves heaped with a chaos of papers, over which only spiders preside? There is not such a thing as a catalogue; to search for a deed is like looking for a needle in a bundle of hay."

The state of his papers had long been a vexation to

the baronet, who knew that he had some of great value, if he could only lay his hands on them.

"Do you think that a peer of France would stoop to be my librarian?" said Sir Miles in a hesitating tone.

"He has stooped to the drudgery of teaching French to shopkeepers' daughters," was the reply.

"A thought occurs to me," said the baronet. "I know that many of my manuscripts are transcripts of French hymns, and valuable works, as yet untranslated, of Huguenot religious writers. To translate and edit these valuable writings might be a congenial work to our noble guest, while to bring them out in a suitable form is a wish which I have cherished for years."

"Such a work would be the very thing to engage the heart and the mind of the marquis!" exclaimed Eustace.

"And I might perhaps succeed, after a time, in procuring a commission in the army for that fine young fellow Louis. In a year or two he would make a splendid soldier."

Eustace shook his head with a smile. "I suggested that to Louis," the young Englishman said, "but he would not entertain the idea for a moment. 'I would never place myself in a position,' he cried, 'which might compel me to draw my sword against my own country and king.'"

"Right, right!" said Sir Miles emphatically. "We

must look out for some other employment for our young Huguenot friend."

"Why not, in the meantime, give him the now vacant place of your park-ranger? He would have the pretty cottage under the elms. The family might dwell there in comparative comfort, and the marquis would be within easy reach of the library here."

"A capital thought," said Sir Miles; "only there would be hardly room in the cottage for that good fellow whom they call Cousin Jacques."

"We need take no thought for him, honest man," said Eustace. "Monsieur Duval had the wit to bring some ready money with him, and I understand that some has been invested for him in England. He has already secured what he calls an *atelier* for himself in the town. Cousin Jacques is really a capital artist, and is likely to be a popular one; many a burgess's wife will be glad to appear on his canvas."

"He is a very light-hearted, agreeable Frenchman, all politeness and good nature," observed the baronet smiling.

"Poor Duval is in great trouble now," said Eustace, "for shocking news has reached him from Paris, and he is crying like a child over the deaths of his wife and daughter. But I think that, like a child, he will be comforted soon. If I do not mistake our French friend, his mind is like a mirror, which reflects vividly what is

directly before it, but keeps no impression long. With the marquis the feelings flow like a full river, deep and calm, whether glittering in sunshine or gliding under deep shadows. With Monsieur Duval the current is more noisy and shallow."

The Greys were not the only persons in the Hall who laid out plans. Adéle, still exceedingly weak, in pain, and unable to rise from her bed, was absorbed in busy thoughts, sad as regarded the past, but hopeful as regarded the future.

Elizabeth was seated in a partially darkened room beside the invalid, whom she thought to be asleep, when a deep sigh from Adéle drew her attention.

"Are you in worse pain, dear child?" she asked gently.

"No, but I am thinking—thinking; I have nothing to do but think," was the sorrowful reply.

As Elizabeth made no observation, after a brief pause Adéle went on:—"I have been thinking what an utterly wasted life mine has hitherto been. I have given you and my dear father nothing but trouble and grief; and oh, how good you have been! You have watched over me and nursed me—me, the most selfish, ungrateful, unworthy of beings. I know that you have forgiven me, but I cannot forgive myself."

"I must punish you by forbidding you to talk thus,"

said Elizabeth playfully, pressing a kiss upon Adéle's pale brow. But Adéle was not in a silent mood.

"When I am strong again—if I ever get well, I will not be such a burden on you, God helping me," said the girl. "I will do something to help my family; I have various plans in my mind."

"Take no thought for the morrow," said Madame la Force. "We shall not be so straitened now, dear child. The kind friends whom God has given us have just offered pleasant employment both to your father and Louis."

"I think that I could teach a little," said Adéle faintly; "just a class of small children." Tuition had been Adéle's aversion.

"Do not trouble your mind with plans," said the step-mother kindly; "your present work is to get well as fast as you can."

"But there is one thing which I *must* do," cried Adéle, "it is so much on my conscience. O mother! I have written much to Felicie, much for which I now feel sorrow and shame. She is my cousin, my most intimate friend, and I have *not* helped her one step on the way to heaven. I have been an evil companion. When Felicie wrote to me that she had given up heretical fancies and burned her Bible—O mother, I never told her how grievous was her sin!"

"Poor Felicie!" sighed Madame la Force.

"I will write—no, my hand cannot hold a pen; but I will dictate to you a letter to Felicie. Please bring your desk. I have been meditating over what I should say. I lay awake half the night composing an earnest letter to my cousin."

"You must not dictate now, it will tire you."

"I do not care for being tired!" cried Adéle with vehemence. "I must have that letter off my mind."

"It would be useless," said Madame la Force in a low tone of voice.

"Not useless—if I pray very hard." Adéle's eyes filled with tears as she spoke. "Mother, is Felicie now married?"

Elizabeth only shook her head. She avoided meeting the earnest gaze of those glistening eyes.

"When will she be married?" asked Adéle.

In vain Elizabeth rose and went to stir the fire, in order to evade further questions regarding Duval's miserable daughter. Adéle's suspicions were roused.

"Why do you not tell me all?" cried Adéle, the fever flush mounting to her cheek.—"O Louis!" she continued, as her brother entered the room, "I am so unhappy about Felicie."

"So are we all," said Louis gravely. "I thought that you were not to be told of her death."

"Death!" echoed Adéle, and the red flush changed in a moment to the colour of ashes.

Adéle knew not the frightful particulars for many days, but what she had heard was enough. A new element of bitterness was added to the sufferer's cup of trial. Many a tear wet Adéle's pillow as she thought of what she might have done, and what she had resolved to do—too late!

On the following day Madame la Force received a communication from Mr. Day, her father's executor, which gave her mingled pleasure and pain. The following is an extract from the letter:—

"Whilst we were removing the furniture, previous to the sale, we were surprised at the weight of a large box which Mr. Page had always kept in his room, and which, when we opened it, had appeared to contain nothing but his clothes and a few old papers. On examining the box more closely, we discovered that it had a false bottom. On raising this, we found a most unexpected treasure beneath. There were numerous small packets, neatly wrapped up in paper and carefully sealed, each containing a hundred guineas. I counted sixty of these packets, evidently the savings of a lifetime, and conveyed them at once to the bank. I propose investing two-thirds of the money for the benefit of your sisters, and await your directions as to forwarding the remaining third, which is your portion according to the will of Mr. Page."

Deeply grateful was Elizabeth to the Giver of all

good for this portion, which relieved her mind from all anxiety regarding pecuniary matters. She was specially thankful on account of her sisters; and yet it was a pang to think how much suffering would have been averted if but a tenth part of that hoarded gold had been spent in her father's lifetime.

With the letter open in her hand, Elizabeth sought her husband, whom she found in the library, with Louis, both deeply engaged in sorting and arranging papers that looked as if they had the dust of a century upon them.

"Now, Louis," said Madame la Force, as La Force and his son finished reading the letter which she had brought, "a wish of yours and of mine can be gratified. I know your desire for a college education, to enable you to enter the ministry of the Church. There is now no difficulty in the way. Your father and I may yet see you in the pulpit—a Protestant pastor."

"Do you think that I would consent to rob you, my mother, of your little inheritance!" exclaimed Louis, his gratitude beaming in his eyes.

"If you did *not* consent," was Elizabeth's smiling reply, "I should say that you denied me the privilege and name of a mother."

La Force returned to his occupation amongst the papers with a spirit full of thankful joy. It might be regarded by the world as a great coming down for a

peer of France, a once wealthy noble, to occupy a humble position as librarian, and accept a salary from an Englishman's hand; but La Force was no slave to the pride of birth. The thought of his heart was at this moment, *The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places; I have a goodly heritage.* Well might the exile for conscience' sake appropriate those beautiful words; for, with much to sweeten life below, his rich inheritance was above!

## CHAPTER XXV.

### A PARTING GLANCE.

LET us now pass over three years, and give a parting glance at the dwellers in Sunshine Lodge; a place which deserves its name, as, whatever the weather might be outside, there seemed to be always sunshine within.

"If there be a happy spot on earth, it is this!" said Jacques Duval half aloud, as on one spring afternoon he crossed the velvet lawn, enamelled with buttercups and daisies. Blithe was the song of the thrush, still sweeter the blackbird's mellow note, and the voice of the cuckoo from the neighbouring wood mingled with the sky-lark's carol dropping down from the sky. The garden was bright with blossoms, all spoke of peace and joy; yet the face of Jacques Duval wore an anxious expression, to which of late it had been a stranger. He was one to take life cheerfully, but at this moment there was evidently some care pressing on the honest man's mind.

Duval was about to go up to the cottage, when the sound of voices in an arbour near made him turn in

that direction. The arbour, made by Louis, was considered by his family a miracle of beauty. Every rustic pillar had its own peculiar creeper, planted by Elizabeth or Bridget; honeysuckle, clematis, and roses contended for the prize of loveliness and fragrance. It was in this arbour that Adéle gave daily instruction, especially from the Bible, to the children of Lady Grey's tenants, this being to the Huguenot maiden a labour of love. It was here that she often sat with her mother and Bridget, as the one lady worked delicate embroidery and the others made clothes for the poor. But the voices which reached the ear of Jacques were neither those of children conning lessons, nor of matron or maiden singing over her work.

Something was going on within that fragrant arbour which would have made the entrance of most visitors a very unwelcome intrusion. But Cousin Jacques knew himself to be a privileged person, so he pushed the clematis aside, and entered, to be a greatly interested witness of the scene before him.

La Force, his noble countenance lighted up with more than its usual expression of benevolence, was in the very act of giving his paternal blessing, as he joined together the hands of Eustace Grey and Adéle. Elizabeth and her sister stood by, smiling with affectionate pleasure; while Louis's eyes beamed with pride as he looked on his lovely sister, his Normandy rose, the affianced bride of his friend.

Jacques, who was taken aback when he saw what was going on, was almost inclined to beat a retreat.

"Come, my dear nephew and faithful friend, my help in need, the preserver of my boy—come and add your blessing to mine," said the marquis. "I hope that you will regard my daughter's future husband as a brother; in the faith he is your brother already."

Jacques cordially shook his new cousin's hand, but still looked shy and embarrassed, almost to a painful degree. He felt that he was called upon to say something, so in a stammering voice observed, "A good wife is a gift from the Lord."

"Poor Jacques!" thought Elizabeth; "his uneasy manner shows that he feels that such a gift was denied to himself."

"I have proved the truth of those words," said the marquis, turning with a smile towards his wife. "I have known the blessing of being given a counsellor in trouble, a comforter in sorrow, one to share every joy and lighten every care, and draw one nearer to the God whom she serves. My child has had a good example before her. I doubt whether the world holds another like Elizabeth la Force."

"Except—perhaps—her sister," faltered Duval, with a heightened colour, glancing timidly towards Bridget, who was standing beside Adéle. The honest man's secret was out. He too was longing for the domestic

happiness which he had never yet known, but which his kindly, affectionate heart would dearly prize.

Every eye was intuitively turned towards the gentle Bridget, who bent her head timidly, "with a smile on her lip and a tear in her eye." A vista of peaceful contentment was opening before one who had passed childhood and youth in a dreary wilderness of trial. She could truly value and faithfully return the love of an honest and God-fearing man.

"Come," said the marquis gaily, "I think that I must to-day join another pair of hands." And he did so.

And so there were two weddings in the little country church which Sir Miles had built near his mansion, and in which Louis la Force was to minister to a Protestant flock. Though the one couple was more richly endowed with youth, talent, and personal attractions, it would be difficult to decide which was the happier pair.

As time rolled on, in two dwellings were heard the patter of little feet, the merry sound of children's laughter. From both were heard the morning hymn of praise, the evening prayer and thanksgiving. Though the La Forces never again beheld fair France, they had no cause to regret that for conscience' sake they had left the land of their fathers. The transplanted trees took root in England, and flourished. Huguenot fugitives came to our island to receive shelter and impart a blessing. Never were the La Forces happier than

when they opened their doors to persecuted countrymen, and amongst them Gerard Martine! The Huguenot pastor passed his last days on earth under the roof of Louis, who tended him as a father. Though the marquis was never wealthy in the worldly sense of the word, he had enough both to spend and to give. *The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and He addeth no sorrow with it.*

Nearly two centuries after the date of my story, a party of English travellers made a tour in Normandy, and amongst other places of note visited the picturesque ruins of Château la Force. The place was almost more beautiful in decay than it had been when it stood in proud strength, and it interested the tourists more than anything else that had met their view in France. An old peasant showed them over the place, told legends of the château, and pointed out where its unfortunate owner, the last of the Fontainebleus, had been, at the time of the Revolution, hanged over his own door.

"But was there not another family in the château, before any Fontainebleu came here?" inquired a bright-eyed young lady.

"Ah! *oui*, the La Forces; they are remembered still. We call that fine old oak yonder the Marquis's Tree, for it was there that he bade farewell to his people when the wicked king turned him out of his home."

"What became of his family?" asked a handsome young Englishman.

The peasant shrugged his shoulders. "God knows," was his careless reply.

"Yes, God knows," said the young man with reverence; "for the marquis has left descendants who are to be found in every quarter of the globe. We," he added, glancing with a smile at his sisters, "are a small detachment of the race."

"O Louis!" exclaimed the young maiden, "when you look at these glorious towers, are you not proud that our ancestor owned them?"

"Far more proud that our ancestor resigned them," replied young La Force; "that, faithful unto death for the sake of Gospel Truth, he was driven into exile!"

THE END.

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